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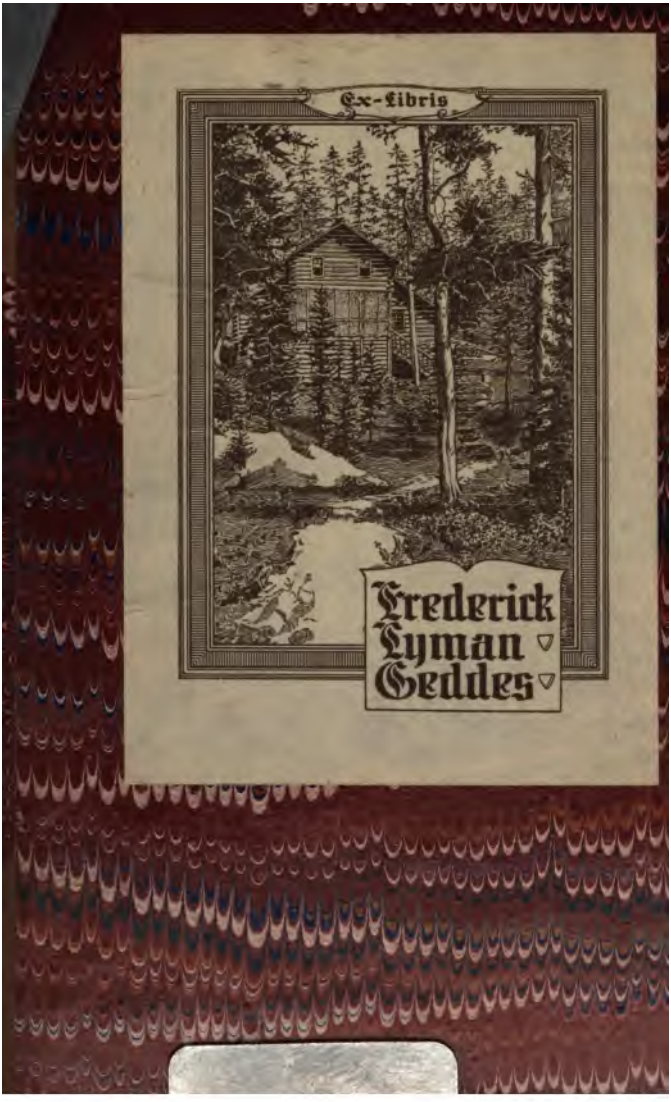
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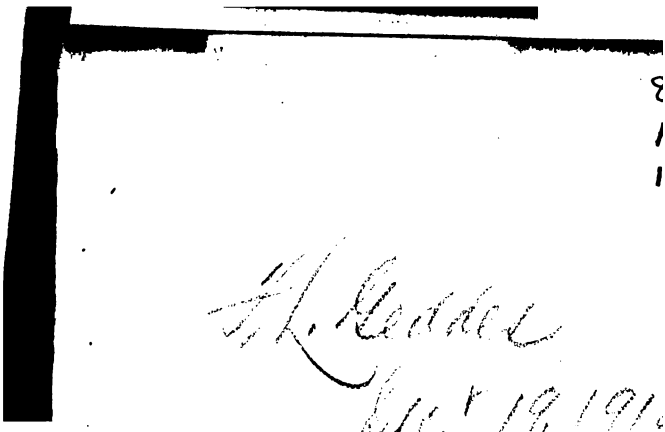

THE SCEPTIC,

THE SIEGE OF VALEN

with other Poems.

Our Ladys Well, near St. Asaph.

EDINBURGH.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SON

THE WORKS

OF

Felicia Dorothea (Brow

MRS HEMANS;

WITH

A MEMOIR OF HER LIFE,

BY

HER SISTER.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,
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THE SCEPTIC.

"Leur raison, qu'ils prennent pour guide, ne présente à leur esprit que des conjectures et des embarras; les absurdités où ils tombent en niant la Religion deviennent plus insoutenables que les verités dont la hauteur les étonne; et pour ne vouloir pas croire des mystères incompréhensibles, ils suivent l'une après l'autre d'incompréhensibles erreurs."

BOSSUET, *Oraisons Funèbres.*

WHEN the young Eagle, with exulting eye,
Has learn'd to dare the splendour of the sky,
And leave the Alps beneath him in his course,
To bathe his crest in morn's empyreal source;
Will his free wing, from that majestic height,
Descend to follow some wild meteor's light,
Which, far below, with evanescent fire,
Shines to delude, and dazzles to expire?

No! still through clouds he wins his upward way,
And proudly claims his heritage of day!
—And shall the spirit, on whose ardent gaze
The dayspring from on high hath pour'd its blaze,
Turn from that pure effulgence, to the beam
Of earth-born light, that sheds a treacherous gleam,

Luring the wanderer, from the star of faith,
To the deep valley of the shades of death?
What bright exchange, what treasure shall be giv
For the high birthright of its hope in Heaven?
If lost the gem which empires could not buy,
What yet remains?—a dark eternity!

Is earth still Eden?—might a Seraph guest,
Still 'midst its chosen bowers delighted rest?
Is all so cloudless and so calm below,
We seek no fairer scenes than *life* can show?
That the cold Sceptic, in his pride elate,
Rejects the promise of a brighter state,
And leaves the rock, no tempest shall displace,
To rear his dwelling on the quicksand's base?

Votary of doubt! then join the festal throng,
Bask in the sunbeam, listen to the song,
Spread the rich board, and fill the wine-cup high,
And bind the wreath ere yet the roses die!
'Tis well, thine eye is yet undimm'd by time,
And thy heart bounds, exulting in its prime;
Smile then unmoved at Wisdom's warning voice,
And, in the glory of thy strength, rejoice!

But life hath sterner tasks; e'en youth's bri
hours
Survive the beauty of their loveliest flowers;
The founts of joy, where pilgrims rest from toil,
Are few and distant on the desert soil;
The soul's pure flame the breath of storms must fa
And pain and sorrow claim their nursling—Man!

Earth's noblest sons the bitter cup have shared—
Proud child of reason! how art *thou* prepared?
When years, with silent might, thy frame have bow'd,
And o'er thy spirit cast their wintry cloud,
Will Memory soothe thee on thy bed of pain
With the bright images of pleasure's train?

Yes! as the sight of some far-distant shore,
Whose well-known scenes his foot shall tread no more,
Would cheer the seaman, by the eddying wave
Drawn, vainly struggling, to th' unfathom'd grave!
Shall Hope, the faithful cherub, hear thy call,
She who, like heaven's own sunbeam, smiles for all?
Will *she* speak comfort?—Thou hast shorn her plume,
That might have raised thee far above the tomb,
And hush'd the only voice whose angel tone
Soothes when all melodies of joy are flown!

For she was born beyond the stars to soar,
And kindling at the source of life, adore;
Thou could'st not, mortal! rivet to the earth
Her eye, whose beam is of celestial birth;
She dwells with those who leave her pinion free,
And sheds the dews of heaven on all but thee.

Yet few there are so lonely, so bereft,
But some true heart, that beats to theirs, is left,
And, haply, one whose strong affection's power
Unchanged may triumph through misfortune's hour,

Still with fond care supports thy languid head,
And keeps unwearied vigils by thy bed.

But thou whose thoughts have no blest home above!
Captive of earth! and canst thou dare to *love?*
To nurse such feelings as delight to rest,
Within that hallow'd shrine—a parent's breast,
To fix each hope, concentrate every tie,
On one frail idol—destined but to die;
Yet mock the faith that points to worlds of light,
Where sever'd souls, made perfect, re-unite?
Then tremble! cling to every passing joy,
Twined with the life a moment may destroy!
If there be sorrow in a parting tear,
Still let "*for ever*" vibrate on thine ear!
If some bright hour on rapture's wing hath flown,
Find more than anguish in the thought—'tis gone!

Go! to a voice such magic influence give,
Thou canst not lose its melody, and live;
And make an eye the lode-star of thy soul,
And let a glance the springs of thought control;
Gaze on a mortal form with fond delight,
Till the fair vision mingles with thy sight;
There seek thy blessings, there repose thy trust,
Lean on the willow, idolize the dust!
Then, when thy treasure best repays thy care,
Think on that dread "*for ever*"—and despair!

And oh! no strange, unwonted storm there needs,
To wreck at once thy fragile ark of reeds.

Watch well its course—explore with anxious eye
Each little cloud that floats along the sky—
Is the blue canopy serenely fair?
Yet may the thunderbolt unseen be there,
And the bark sink, when peace and sunshine sleep
On the smooth bosom of the waveless deep!
Yes! ere a sound, a sign, announce thy fate,
May the blow fall which makes thee desolate!
Not always Heaven's destroying angel shrouds
His awful form in tempests and in clouds;
He fills the summer air with latent power,
He hides his venom in the scented flower,
He steals upon thee in the Zephyr's breath,
And festal garlands veil the shafts of death!

Where art thou *then*, who thus didst rashly cast
Thine all upon the mercy of the blast,
And vainly hope the tree of life to find
Rooted in sands that flit before the wind?
Is not that earth thy spirit loved so well
It wish'd not in a brighter sphere to dwell,
Become a desert *now*, a vale of gloom,
O'ershadow'd with the midnight of the tomb?
Where shalt thou turn?—it is not thine to raise
To yon pure heaven thy calm confiding gaze,
No gleam reflected from that realm of rest
Steals on the darkness of thy troubled breast;
Not for thine eye shall Faith divinely shed
Her glory round the image of the dead;
And if, when slumber's lonely couch is prest,
The form departed be thy spirit's guest,
It bears no light from purer worlds to this;
Thy future lends not e'en a dream of bliss.

But who shall dare the gate of life to close,
Or say, *thus far* the stream of mercy flows?
That fount unseal'd, whose boundless waves embrace
Each distant isle, and visit every race,
Pours from the throne of God its current free,
Nor yet denies th' immortal draught to thee.
O! while the doom impends, not yet decreed,
While yet th' Atoner hath not ceased to plead,
While still, suspended by a single hair,
The sharp bright sword hangs quivering in the air,
Bow down thy heart to Him who will not break
The bruised reed; e'en yet, awake, awake!
Patient, because Eternal,[1] He may hear
Thy prayer of agony with pitying ear,
And send his chastening Spirit from above,
O'er the deep chaos of thy soul to move.

But seek thou mercy through His name alone,
To whose unequall'd sorrows none was shown.
Through Him, who here in mortal garb abode,
As man to suffer, and to heal as God;
And, born the sons of utmost time to bless,
Endured all scorn, and aided all distress.

Call thou on Him—for He, in human form,
Hath walk'd the waves of life, and still'd the storm.
He, when her hour of lingering grace was past,
O'er Salem wept, relenting to the last,
Wept with such tears as Judah's monarch pour'd
O'er his lost child, ungrateful, yet deplored;
And, offering guiltless blood that guilt might live,
Taught from his Cross the lesson—to forgive!

Call thou on Him—his prayer e'en then arose,
Breathed in unpitied anguish for his foes.
And haste!—ere bursts the lightning from on high,
Fly to the City of thy Refuge, fly![2]
So shall th' Avenger turn his steps away,
And sheath his falchion, baffled of its prey.

Yet must long days roll on, ere peace shall brood,
As the soft halcyon, o'er thy heart subdued;
Ere yet the dove of Heaven descend, to shed
Inspiring influence o'er thy fallen head.
—He, who hath pined in dungeons, 'midst the shade
Of such deep night as man for man hath made,
Through lingering years; if call'd at length to be,
Once more, by nature's boundless charter, free,
Shrinks feebly back, the blaze of noon to shun,
Fainting at day, and blasted by the sun.

Thus, when the captive soul hath long remain'd
In its own dread abyss of darkness chain'd,
If the Deliverer, in his might, at last,
Its fetters, born of earth, to earth should cast,
The beam of truth o'erpowers its dazzled sight,
Trembling it sinks, and finds no joy in light
But this will pass away—that spark of mind,
Within thy frame unquenchably enshrined,
Shall live to triumph in its bright'ning ray,
Born to be foster'd with ethereal day.
Then wilt thou bless the hour, when o'er thee pass'd,
On wing of flame, the purifying blast,
And sorrow's voice, through paths before untrod,
Like Sinai's trumpet, call'd thee to thy God!

But hopest thou, in thy panoply of pride,
Heaven's messenger, affliction, to deride?
In thine own strength unaided to defy,
With Stoic smile, the arrows of the sky?
Torn by the vulture, fetter'd to the rock,
Still, demigod! the tempest wilt thou mock?
Alas! the tower that crests the mountain's brow
A thousand years may awe the vale below,
Yet not the less be shatter'd on its height,
By one dread moment of the earthquake's might!
A thousand pangs thy bosom may have borne,
In silent fortitude, or haughty scorn,
Till comes the one, the master-anguish, sent
To break the mighty heart that ne'er was bent.

Oh! what is nature's strength? the vacant eye,
By mind deserted, hath a dread reply!
The wild delirious laughter of despair,
The mirth of frenzy—seek an answer there!
Turn not away, though pity's cheek grow pale,
Close not thine ear against their awful tale.
They tell thee, Reason, wandering from the ray
Of Faith, the blazing pillar of her way,
In the mid-darkness of the stormy wave,
Forsook the struggling soul she could not save!
Weep not, sad moralist! o'er desert plains,
Strew'd with the wrecks of grandeur—mouldering fanes,
Arches of triumph, long with weeds o'ergrown,
And regal cities, now the serpent's own:
Earth has more awful ruins—one lost mind,
Whose star is quench'd, hath lessons for mankind,

Of deeper import than each prostrate dome,
Mingling its marble with the dust of Rome.

But who, with eye unshrinking, shall explore
That waste, illumed by reason's beam no more?
Who pierce the deep, mysterious clouds that roll
Around the shatter'd temple of the soul,
Curtain'd with midnight?—low its columns lie,
And dark the chambers of its imag'ry,[3]
Sunk are its idols now—and God alone
May rear the fabric, by their fall o'erthrown!
Yet, from its inmost shrine, by storms laid bare,
Is heard an oracle that cries—"Beware!
Child of the dust! but ransomed of the skies!
One breath of Heaven—and thus thy glory dies!
Haste, ere the hour of doom—draw nigh to him
Who dwells above between the cherubim!"

Spirit dethroned! and check'd in mid career,
Son of the morning! exiled from thy sphere,
Tell us thy tale!—Perchance thy race was run
With science, in the chariot of the sun;
Free as the winds the paths of space to sweep,
Traverse the untrodden kingdoms of the deep,
And search the laws that Nature's springs control,
There tracing all—save Him who guides the whole!

Haply thine eye its ardent glance had cast
Through the dim shades, the portals of the past;
By the bright lamp of thought thy care had fed
From the far beacon-lights of ages fled,

The depths of time exploring, to retrace
The glorious march of many a vanish'd race.

Or did thy power pervade the living lyre,
Till its deep chords became intinct with fire,
Silenced all meaner notes, and swell'd on high,
Full and alone, their mighty harmony,
While woke each passion from its cell profound,
And nations started at th' electric sound?

Lord of th' ascendant! what avails it now,
Though bright the laurels waved upon thy brow?
What, though thy name, through distant empires heard,
Bade the heart bound, as doth a battle-word?
Was it for *this* thy still-unwearied eye
Kept vigil with the watchfires of the sky,
To make the secrets of all ages thine,
And commune with majestic thoughts that shine
O'er Time's long shadowy pathway?—hath thy mind
Sever'd its lone dominions from mankind,
For *this* to woo their homage?—Thou hast sought
All, save the wisdom with salvation fraught,
Won every wreath—but that which will not die,
Nor aught neglected—save eternity!

And did all fail thee, in the hour of wrath,
When burst th' o'erwhelming vials on thy path?
Could not the voice of Fame inspire thee then,
O spirit! scepter'd by the sons of men,
With an immortal's courage, to sustain
The transient agonies of earthly pain?

—One, one there was, all-powerful to have saved,
When the loud fury of the billow raved;
But him thou knew'st not—and the light he lent
Hath vanish'd from its ruin'd tenement,
But left thee breathing, moving, lingering yet,
A thing we shrink from—vainly to forget!
—Lift the dread veil no further—hide, oh! hide
The bleeding form, the couch of suicide!
The dagger, grasp'd in death—the brow, the eye,
Lifeless, yet stamp'd with rage and agony;
The soul's dark traces left in many a line
Graved on *his* mein, who died,—"and made no sign!"
Approach not, gaze not—lest thy fever'd brain
Too deep that image of despair retain;
Angels of slumber! o'er the midnight hour,
Let not such visions claim unhallow'd power,
Lest the mind sink with terror, and above
See but th' Avenger's arm, forget th' Atoner's love!

O Thou! th' unseen, th' all-seeing!—Thou whose ways,
Mantled with darkness, mock all finite gaze,
Before whose eyes the creatures of Thy hand,
Seraph and man, alike in weakness stand,
And countless ages, trampling into clay
Earth's empires on their march, are but a day;
Father of worlds unknown, unnumber'd!—Thou,
With whom all time is one eternal *now*,
Who know'st no past, nor future — Thou whose breath

Goes forth, and bears to myriads, life or death!
Look on us, guide us!—wanderers of a sea
Wild and obscure, what are we, reft of Thee?
A thousand rocks, deep-hid, elude our sight,
A star may set—and we are lost in night;
A breeze may waft us to the whirlpool's brink,
A treach'rous song allure us—and we sink!

Oh! by *His* love, who, veiling Godhead's light,
To moments circumscribed the Infinite,
And Heaven and Earth disdain'd not to ally
By that dread union—Man with Deity;
Immortal tears o'er mortal woes who shed,
And, ere he raised them, wept above the dead;
Save, or we perish!—Let Thy word control
The earthquakes of that universe—the soul;
Pervade the depths of passion—speak once more
The mighty mandate, guard of every shore,
"Here shall thy waves be stay'd"—in grief, in pain,
The fearful poise of reason's sphere maintain,
Thou, by whom suns are balanced!—thus secure
In Thee shall Faith and Fortitude endure;
Conscious of Thee, unfaltering, shall the just
Look upward still, in high and holy trust,
And by affliction guided to Thy shrine,
The first, last thought of suffering hearts be Thine.

And oh! be near, when, clothed with conquering power,
The King of Terrors claims his own dread hour:
When, on the edge of that unknown abyss,
Which darkly parts us from the realm of bliss,

Awe-struck alike the timid and the brave,
Alike subdued the monarch and the slave,
Must drink the cup of trembling[4]—when we see
Nought in the universe but Death and Thee,
Forsake us not—if still, when life was young,
Faith to thy bosom, as her home, hath sprung,
If Hope's retreat hath been, through all the past,
The shadow by the Rock of Ages cast,
Father, forsake us not!—when tortures urge
The shrinking soul to that mysterious verge;
When from Thy justice to Thy love we fly,
On Nature's conflict look with pitying eye,
Bid the strong wind, the fire, the earthquake cease,
Come in the still small voice, and whisper—peace![5]

For oh! 'tis awful—He that hath beheld
The parting spirit, by its fears repell'd,
Cling in weak terror to its earthly chain,
And from the dizzy brink recoil, in vain;
He that hath seen the last convulsive throe
Dissolve the union form'd and closed in woe,
Well knows that hour is awful.—In the pride
Of youth and health, by sufferings yet untried,
We talk of Death, as something, which 'twere sweet
In Glory's arms exultingly to meet,
A closing triumph, a majestic scene,
Where gazing nations watch the hero's mien,
As, undismay'd amidst the tears of all,
He folds his mantle, regally to fall!

Hush, fond enthusiast!—still, obscure and lone,
Yet not less terrible because unknown,

Is the last hour of thousands—they retire
From life's throng'd path, unnoticed to expire;
As the light leaf, whose fall to ruin bears
Some trembling insect's little world of cares,
Descends in silence—while around waves on
The mighty forest, reckless what is gone!
Such is man's doom—and, ere an hour be flown,
—Start not, thou trifler!—such may be thine own.

But, as life's current in its ebb draws near
The shadowy gulf, there wakes a thought of fear,
A thrilling thought, which haply mock'd before,
We fain would stifle—but it sleeps no more!
There are who fly its murmurs 'midst the throng,
That join the masque of revelry and song;
Yet still Death's image, by its power restored,
Frowns 'midst the roses of the festal board,
And when deep shades o'er earth and ocean brood,
And the heart owns the might of solitude,
Is its low whisper heard?—a note profound,
But wild and startling as the trumpet sound,
That bursts, with sudden blast, the dead repose
Of some proud city, storm'd by midnight foes!

Oh! vainly Reason's scornful voice would prove
That life hath nought to claim such lingering love,
And ask if e'er the captive, half unchain'd,
Clung to the links which yet his step restrain'd?
In vain Philosophy, with tranquil pride,
Would mock the feelings she perchance can hide,
Call up the countless armies of the dead,
Point to the pathway beaten by their tread,

And say—"What wouldst thou? Shall the fix'd
decree,
Made for creation, be reversed for *thee?*"
—Poor, feeble aid!—proud Stoic! ask not why,
It is enough, that nature shrinks to die!
Enough, *that* horror, which thy words upbraid,
Is her dread penalty, and must be paid!
—Search thy deep wisdom, solve the scarce defined
And mystic questions of the parting mind,
Half check'd, half utter'd—tell her, what shall burst,
In whelming grandeur, on her vision first,
When freed from mortal films?—what viewless
world
Shall first receive her wing, but half unfurl'd?
What awful and unbodied beings guide
Her timid flight through regions yet untried?
Say, if at once, her final doom to hear,
Before her God the trembler must appear,
Or wait that day of terror, when the sea
Shall yield its hidden dead, and heaven and earth
shall flee?

Hast thou no answer?—then deride no more
The thoughts that shrink, yet cease not to explore
Th' unknown, th' unseen, the future—though the
heart,
As at unearthly sounds, before them start;
Though the frame shudder, and the spirit sigh,
They have their source in immortality!
Whence, then, shall strength, which reason's aid
denies,
An equal to the mortal conflict rise?

And thou,* just lent thy gladden'd isles to bless,
Then snatch'd from earth with all thy loveliness,
With all a nation's blessings on thy head,
O England's flower! wert gather'd to the dead?
But Thou didst teach us. Thou to every heart,
Faith's lofty lesson didst thyself impart!
When fled the hope through all thy pangs whic
smiled,
When thy young bosom, o'er thy lifeless child,
Yearn'd with vain longing—still thy patient eye,
To its last light, beam'd holy constancy!
Torn from a lot in cloudless sunshine cast,
Amidst those agonies—thy first and last,
Thy pale lip, quivering with convulsive throes,
Breathed not a plaint—and settled in repose;
While bow'd thy royal head to Him, whose power
Spoke in the fiat of that midnight hour,
Who from the brightest vision of a throne,
Love, glory, empire, claim'd thee for his own,
And spread such terror o'er the sea-girt coast,
As blasted Israel, when her Ark was lost!

"It is the will of God!"—yet, yet we hear
The words which closed thy beautiful career;
Yet should we mourn thee in thy blest abode,
But for that thought—"It is the will of God!"
Who shall arraign th' Eternal's dark decree,
If not one murmur then escaped from thee?
Oh! still, though vanishing without a trace,
Thou hast not left one scion of thy race,

* The Princess Charlotte.

Still may thy memory bloom our vales among,
Hallow'd by freedom, and enshrined in song!
Still may thy pure, majestic spirit dwell,
Bright on the isles which loved thy name so well,
E'en as an angel, with presiding care,
To wake and guard thine own high virtues there.

For lo! the hour when storm-presaging skies
Call on the watchers of the land to rise,
To set the sign of fire on every height,[6]
And o'er the mountains rear, with patriot might,
Prepared, if summon'd, in its cause to die,
The banner of our faith, the Cross of victory!

By this hath England conquer'd—field and flood
Have own'd her sov'reignty—alone she stood,
When chains o'er all the scepter'd earth were thrown,
In high and holy singleness, alone,
But mighty in her God—and shall she now
Forget before th' Omnipotent to bow?
From the bright fountain of her glory turn,
Or bid strange fire upon his altars burn?
No! sever'd land, 'midst rocks and billows rude,
Throned in thy majesty of solitude,
Still in the deep asylum of thy breast
Shall the pure elements of greatness rest,
Virtue and faith, the tutelary powers,
Thy hearths that hallow, and defend thy towers!

Still, where thy hamlet-vales, O chosen isle!
In the soft beauty of their verdure smile,

Where yew and elm o'ershade the lowly fanes,
That guard the peasant's records and remains,
May the blest echoes of the Sabbath-bell
Sweet on the quiet of the woodlands swell,
And from each cottage-dwelling of thy glades,
When starlight glimmers through the deep'ning shades,
Devotion's voice in choral hymns arise,
And bear the land's warm incense to the skies.

There may the mother, as with anxious joy
To Heaven her lessons consecrate her boy,
Teach his young accent still the immortal lays
Of Zion's bards, in inspiration's days,
When angels, whispering through the cedar shade,
Prophetic tones to Judah's harp convey'd;
And as, her soul all glistening in her eyes,
She bids the prayer of infancy arise,
Tell of his name, who left his Throne on high,
Earth's lowliest lot to bear and sanctify,
His love divine, by keenest anguish tried,
And fondly say—"My child, for thee He died!"

NOTES.

Note 1, page 6, line 13.

Patient, because Eternal.

" He is patient, because He is eternal."
ST AUGUSTINE.

Note 2, page 7, line 4.

Fly to the City of thy Refuge, fly!

" Then ye shall appoint you cities, to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither which killeth any person at unawares.—And they shall be unto you cities of refuge from the avenger."—NUMBERS, chap. 35.

Note 3, page 9, line 8.

And dark the chambers of its imag'ry.

" Every man in the chambers of his imagery."
EZEKIEL, chap. 8.

Note 4, page 13, line 3.

Must drink the cup of trembling.

" Thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out."—ISAIAH, chap. 51.

fidel is referred to the Christian religion, in a strain, which unites the fervour of devotion with poetic sensibility. . . . The poem proceeds to depict, in a forcible manner the unfortunate state of a mind which acquires every kind of knowledge but that which gives salvation; and, having gained possession of the secrets of all ages, and communed with the majestic minds that shine along the pathway of time, neglects nothing but eternity. Such a one, in the season of suffering, finds relief in suicide, and escapes to death as to an eternal rest. The thought of death recurs to the mind of the poet, and calls forth a fervent prayer for the divine presence and support in the hour of dissolution; for the hour, when the soul is brought to the mysterious verge of another life, is an 'awful one.' . . . . . This is followed by an allusion to the strong love of life which belongs to human nature, and the instinctive apprehension with which the parting mind muses on its future condition, and asks of itself mystic questions, that it cannot solve. But through the influence of religion—

> 'He whom the busy world shall miss no more
> Than morn one dewdrop from her countless store,
> Earth's most neglected child, with trusting heart,
> Call'd to the hope of glory, shall depart!'

"After some lines expressing the spirit of English patriotism, in a manner with which foreigners can only be pleased, the poem closes with the picture of a mother teaching her child the first lessons of religion, by holding up the divine example of the Saviour.

"We have been led into a longer notice of this poem, for it illustrates the character of Mrs Hemans's manner. We perceive in it a loftiness of purpose, an earnestness of thought, sometimes made more interesting by a tinge of melancholy, a depth of religious feeling, a mind alive to all the interests, gratifications, and sorrows of social life." —Professor Norton (in *North American Review*, April 1827)

"We have, on more than one occasion, expressed the very high opinion which we entertain of the talents of this

lady; and it is gratifying to find, that she gives us no reason to retract or modify in any degree the applause already bestowed, and that every fresh exhibition of her powers enhances and confirms her claims upon our admiration. Mrs Hemans is indeed but in the infancy of her poetical career; but it is an infancy of unrivalled beauty, and of very high promise. Not but that she has already performed more than has often been sufficient to win for other candidates no mean place in the roll of fame, but because what she has already done, shrinks, when compared with what we consider to be her own great capacity, to mere incipient excellence—the intimation rather than the fulfillment of the high destiny of her genius.

. . . The verses of Mrs Hemans appear the spontaneous offspring of intense and noble feeling, governed by a clear understanding, and fashioned into elegance by an exquisite delicacy and precision of taste. With more than the force of many of her masculine competitors, she never ceases to be strictly *feminine* in the whole current of her thought and feeling, nor approaches by any chance the verge of that free and intrepid course of speculation, of which the boldness is more conspicuous than the wisdom, but into which some of the most remarkable among the female literati of our times have freely and fearlessly plunged. She has, in the poem before us, made choice of a subject of which it would have been very difficult to have reconciled the treatment, in the hands of some female authors, to the delicacy which belongs to the sex, and the tenderness and enthusiasm which form its finest characteristics. A coarse and chilling cento of the exploded fancies of modern scepticism, done into rhyme by the hand of a woman, would have been doubly disgusting, by the revival of absurdities long consigned to oblivion, and by the revolting exhibition of a female mind shorn of all its attractions, and wrapt in darkness and defiance. But Mrs Hemans has chosen the better and the nobler cause, and, while she has left in the poem before us every trace of vigorous intellect of which the subject admitted, and has far transcended in energy of thought

the prosing pioneers of unbelief, she has sustained throughout a tone of warm and confiding piety, and has thus proved that the humility of hope and of faith has in it none of the weakness with which it has been charged by the arrogance of impiety, but owns a divine and mysterious vigour residing under the very aspect of gentleness and devotion."—*Edinburgh Monthly Review*, vol. iii.

"Her last two publications are works of a higher stamp; works, indeed, of which no living poet need to be ashamed. The first of them is entitled *The Sceptic*, and is devoted, as our readers will easily anticipate, to advocating the cause of religion. Undoubtedly the poem must have owed its being to the circumstances of the times—to a laudable indignation at the course which literature in many departments seemed lately to be taking in this country, and at the doctrines disseminated with industry, principally (but by no means exclusively, as has been falsely supposed) among the lower orders. Mrs Hemans, however, does not attempt to reason learnedly or laboriously in verse; few poems, ostensibly philosophical or didactic, have ever been of use, except to display the ingenuity and talent of the writers. People are not often taught a science or an art in poetry, and much less will an infidel be converted by a theological treatise in verse. But the argument of *The Sceptic* is one of irresistible force to confirm a wavering mind; it is simply resting the truth of religion on the necessity of it—on the utter misery and helplessness of man without it. This argument is in itself available for all the purposes of poetry: it appeals to the imagination and passions of man; it is capable of interesting all our affectionate hopes and charities, of acting upon all our natural fears. Mrs Hemans has gone through this range with great feeling and ability; and, when she comes to the mind which has clothed itself in its own strength, and relying proudly on that alone in the hour of affliction, has sunk into distraction in the contest, she rises into a strain of moral poetry not often surpassed:—

"Oh, what is nature's strength?—the vacant eye,
By mind deserted, hath a dread reply,' &c."

Quarterly Review, vol. xxiv.

A TALE OF THE SECRET TRIBUNAL.

THE Secret Tribunal,* which attained such formidable power towards the close of the fourteenth century, is mentioned in history as an institution publicly known so early as in the year 1211. Its members, who were called Free Judges, were unknown to the people, and were bound by a tremendous oath, to deliver up their dearest friends and relatives, without exception, if they had committed any offence cognizable by the tribunal. They were also under an obligation to relate all they knew concerning the affair, to cite the accused, and, in case of his condemnation, to pursue and put him to death, wherever he might be met with. The proceedings of this tribunal were carried on at night, and with the greatest mystery; and though it was usual to summon a culprit three times before sentence was passed, yet persons obnoxious to it were sometimes accused and condemned without any citation. After condemnation, it was almost impossible for any one to escape the vengeance of the Free Judges, for their commands set thousands of assassins in motion, who had sworn not to spare the life of their nearest

* See the works of Baron Bock and Professor Kramer.

relation, if required to sacrifice it, but to execute the decrees of the order with the most devoted obedience, even should they consider the object of their pursuit as the most innocent of men. Almost all persons of rank and fortune sought admission into the society; there were Free Judges even amongst the magistrates of the imperial cities, and every prince had some of their order in his council. When a member of this tribunal was not of himself strong enough to seize and put to death a criminal, he was not to lose sight of him until he met with a sufficient number of his comrades for the purpose, and these were obliged, upon his making certain signs, to lend him immediate assistance, without asking any questions. It was usual to hang up the person condemned, with a willow branch, to the first tree; but if circumstances obliged them to dispatch him with a poniard, they left it in his body, that it might be known he had not been assassinated, but executed by a Free Judge. All the transactions of the *Sages* or *Seers* (as they called themselves), were enveloped in mystery, and it is even now unknown by what signs they revealed themselves to each other. At length their power became so extensive and redoubtable, that the Princes of the Empire found it necessary to unite their exertions for its suppression, in which they were at length successful.

The following account of this extraordinary association is given by Madame de Staël:—"Des juges mysterieux, inconnus l'un à l'autre, toujours masqués, et se rassemblant pendant la nuit, punissoient dans le silence, et gravoient seulement sur le poignard

qu'ils enforçoient dans le sein du coupable ce mot terrible : TRIBUNAL SECRET. Ils prévenoient le condamné, en faisant crier trois fois sous les fenêtres de sa maison, Malheur, Malheur, Malheur! Alors l'infortuné savoit que par-tout, dans l'étranger, dans son concitoyen, dans son parent même, il pouvoit trouver son meurtrier. La solitude, la foule, les villes, les campagnes, tout étoit rempli par la presence invisible de cette conscience armée qui poursuivoit les criminels. On conçoit comment cette terrible institution pouvoit être necessaire, dans un temps où chaque homme étoit fort contre tous, au lieu que tous doivent être forts contre chacun. Il falloit que la justice surprît le criminel avant qu'il pût s'en defendre ; mais cette punition qui planoit dans les airs comme une ombre vengeresse, cette sentence mortelle qui pouvoit receler le sein même d'un ami, frappoit d'une invincible terreur."

L'Allemagne, Vol. II.

NIGHT veil'd the mountains of the vine,
And storms had roused the foaming Rhine,
And, mingling with the pinewood's roar,
Its billows hoarsely chafed the shore,
While glen and cavern, to their moans,
Gave answer with a thousand tones:
Then, as the voice of storms appall'd
The peasant of the Odenwald,*

* The Odenwald, a forest-district near the Rhine, adjoining the territories of Darmstadt.

Shuddering he deem'd, that, far on high,
'Twas the wild huntsman rushing by,
Riding the blast with phantom speed,
With cry of hound, and tramp of steed,
While his fierce train, as on they flew,
Their horns in savage chorus blew,
Till rock, and tower, and convent round,
Rung to the shrill unearthly sound.

Vain dreams! far other footsteps traced
The forest paths, in secret haste;
Far other sounds were on the night,
Though lost amidst the tempest's might,
That fill'd the echoing earth and sky,
With its own awful harmony.
There stood a lone and ruin'd fane,
Far in the Odenwald's domain,
'Midst wood and rock, a deep recess
Of still and shadowy loneliness.
Long grass its pavement had o'ergrown,
The wild-flower waved o'er the altar-stone,
The night-wind rock'd the tottering pile,
As it swept along the roofless aisle,
For the forest-boughs, and the stormy sky,
Were all that minster's canopy.

Many a broken image lay
In the mossy mantle of decay,
And partial light the moonbeams darted
O'er trophies of the long departed;
For there the chiefs of other days,
The mighty, slumber'd, with their praise:

'Twas long since aught but the dews of Heaven
A tribute to their bier had given,
Long since a sound but the moaning blast
Above their voiceless home had pass'd.

So slept the proud, and with them all
The records of their fame and fall;
Helmet, and shield, and sculptured crest,
Adorn'd the dwelling of their rest,
And emblems of the Holy Land
Were carved by some forgotten hand;
But the helm was broke, the shield defaced,
And the crest through weeds might scarce be traced;
And the scatter'd leaves of the northern pine
Half hid the palm of Palestine.
So slept the glorious—lowly laid,
As the peasant in his native shade;
Some hermit's tale, some shepherd's rhyme,
All that high deeds could win from time!

What footsteps move, with measured tread,
Amid those chambers of the dead?
What silent, shadowy beings glide
Low tombs and mouldering shrines beside,
Peopling the wild and solemn scene
With forms well suited to its mien?
Wanderer, away! let none intrude
On their mysterious solitude!
Lo! these are they, that awful band,
The secret Watchers of the land,
They that, unknown and uncontroll'd,
Their dark and dread tribunal hold.

They meet not in the monarch's dome,
They meet not in the chieftain's home;
But where, unbounded o'er their heads,
All heaven magnificently spreads,
And from its depths of cloudless blue
The eternal stars their deeds may view!
Where'er the flowers of the mountain sod
By roving foot are seldom trod;
Where'er the pathless forest waves,
Or the ivy clothes forsaken graves;
Where'er wild legends mark a spot,
By mortals shunn'd, but unforgot,
There, circled by the shades of night,
They judge of crimes that shrink from light,
And guilt, that deems its secret known
To the One unslumbering eye alone,
Yet hears their name with a sudden start,
As an icy touch had chill'd its heart,
For the shadow of th' avenger's hand
Rests dark and heavy on the land.

There rose a voice from the ruin's gloom
And woke the echoes of the tomb,
As if the noble hearts beneath
Sent forth deep answers to its breath.

"When the midnight stars are burning,
And the dead to earth returning;
When the spirits of the blest
Rise upon the good man's rest;
When each whisper of the gale
Bids the cheek of guilt turn pale;

In the shadow of the hour
That o'er the soul hath deepest power,
Why thus meet we, but to call
For judgment on the criminal?
Why, but the doom of guilt to seal,
And point th' avenger's holy steel?
A fearful oath has bound our souls,
A fearful power our arm controls!
There is an ear, awake on high,
E'en to thought's whispers, ere they die;
There is an eye, whose beam pervades
All depths, all deserts, and all shades;
That ear hath heard our awful vow,
That searching eye is on us now!
Let him whose heart is unprofaned,
Whose hand no blameless blood hath stain'd—
Let him, whose thoughts no record keep
Of crimes, in silence buried deep,
Here, in the face of Heaven, accuse
The guilty whom its wrath pursues!"

'Twas hushed—that voice of thrilling sound,
And a dead silence reign'd around.
Then stood forth one, whose dim-seen form,
Tower'd like a phantom in the storm;
Gathering his mantle, as a cloud,
With its dark folds his face to shroud,
Through pillar'd arches on he pass'd,
With stately step, and paused at last,
Where, on the altar's mouldering stone,
The fitful moonbeam brightly shone;

Then on the fearful stillness broke
Low, solemn tones, as thus he spoke:

"Before that eye, whose glance pervades
All depths, all deserts, and all shades;
Heard by that ear awake on high
E'en to thought's whispers ere they die;
With all a mortal's awe I stand,
Yet with pure heart, and stainless hand.
To Heaven I lift that hand and call
For judgment on the criminal;
The earth is dyed with bloodshed's hues,
It cries for vengeance—I accuse!"

"Name thou the guilty! say for whom
Thou claim'st th' inevitable doom!

"Albert of Lindheim—to the skies
The voice of blood against him cries;
A brother's blood—his hand is dyed
With the deep stain of fratricide.
One hour, one moment, hath reveal'd,
What years in darkness had conceal'd,
But all in vain—the gulf of time
Refused to close upon his crime;
And guilt that slept on flowers, shall know,
The earthquake was but hush'd below!

Here, where amidst the noble dead,
Awed by their fame, he dare not tread;
Where, left by him to dark decay,

Their trophies moulder fast away;
Around us and beneath us lie
The relics of his ancestry;
The chiefs of Lindheim's ancient race,
Each in his last low dwelling-place:
But one is absent—o'er *his* grave
The palmy shades of Syria wave;
Far distant from his native Rhine,
He died unmourn'd, in Palestine;
The Pilgrim sought the Holy Land,
To perish by a brother's hand!
Peace to his soul! though o'er his bed
No dirge be pour'd, no tear be shed,
Though all he loved his name forget.
They live who shall avenge him yet!"

"Accuser! how to thee alone
Became the fearful secret known?"

"There is an hour when vain remorse
First wakes in her eternal force;
When pardon may not be retrieved,
When conscience will not be deceived.
He that beheld the victim bleed,
Beheld, and aided in the deed—
When earthly fears had lost their power
Reveal'd the tale in such an hour,
Unfolding, with his latest breath,
All that gave keener pangs to death."

"By Him, th' All-seeing and Unseen,
Who is for ever, and hath been,

And by th' Atoner's cross adored,
And by th' avenger's holy sword,
By truth eternal and divine,
Accuser! wilt thou swear to thine?"
—" The cross upon my heart is prest,
I hold the dagger to my breast;
If false the tale whose truth I swear,
Be mine the murderer's doom to bear!"

Then sternly rose the dread reply—
" His days are number'd—he must die!
There is no shadow of the night,
So deep as to conceal his flight;
Earth doth not hold so lone a waste,
But there his footstep shall be traced;
Devotion hath no shrine so blest,
That there in safety he may rest.
Where'er he treads, let Vengeance there
Around him spread her secret snare!
In the busy haunts of men,
In the still and shadowy glen,
When the social board is crown'd,
When the wine-cup sparkles round;
When his couch of sleep is prest,
And a dream his spirit's guest;
When his bosom knows no fear,
Let the dagger still be near,
Till, sudden as the lightning's dart,
Silent and swift it reach his heart!
One warning voice, one fearful word,
Ere morn beneath his towers be heard,
Then vainly may the guilty fly,

Unseen, unaided,—he must die!
Let those he loves prepare his tomb,
Let friendship lure him to his doom!
Perish his deeds, his name, his race,
Without a record or a trace!
Away! be watchful, swift, and free,
To wreak th' invisible's decree.
'Tis pass'd—th' avenger claims his prey,
On to the chase of death—away!"

And all was still—the sweeping blast
Caught not a whisper as it pass'd;
The shadowy forms were seen no more,
The tombs deserted as before;
And the wide forest waved immense,
In dark and lone magnificence.
In Lindheim's towers the feast had closed;
The song was hush'd, the bard reposed;
Sleep settled on the weary guest,
And the castle's lord retired to rest.
To rest!—the captive doom'd to die
May slumber, when his hour is nigh;
The seaman, when the billows foam,
Rock'd on the mast, may dream of home;
The warrior, on the battle's eve,
May win from care a short reprieve;
But earth and heaven alike deny
Their peace to guilt's o'erwearied eye;
And night, that brings to grief a calm,
To toil a pause, to pain a balm,
Hath spells terrific in her course,
Dread sounds and shadows, for remorse,

Voices, that long from earth had fled,
And steps and echoes from the dead;
And many a dream, whose forms arise,
Like a darker world's realities!
Call them not vain illusions—born,
But for the wise and brave to scorn!
Heaven, that the penal doom defers,
Hath yet its thousand ministers,
To scourge the heart, unseen, unknown,
In shade, in silence, and alone,
Concentrating in one brief hour
Ages of retribution's power!

If thou wouldst know the lot of those,
Whose souls are dark with guilty woes,
Ah! seek them not where pleasure's throng
Are listening to the voice of song;
Seek them not where the banquet glows,
And the red vineyard's nectar flows:
There mirth may flush the hollow cheek,
The eye of feverish joy may speak,
And smiles, the ready mask of pride,
The canker-worm within may hide:
Heed not those signs! they but delude;
Follow, and mark their solitude!

The song is hush'd, the feast is done,
And Lindheim's lord remains alone,
Alone, in silence and unrest,
With the dread secret of his breast;
Alone with anguish and with fear;
—There needs not an avenger here!

Behold him!—Why that sudden start?
Thou hear'st the beating of thy heart!
Thou hear'st the night-wind's hollow sigh,
Thou hear'st the rustling tapestry!
No sound but these may near thee be;
Sleep! all things earthly sleep—but thee.

No! there are murmurs on the air,
And a voice is heard that cries—"Despair!"
And he who trembles fain would deem
'Twas the whisper of a waking dream.
Was it but this?—again 'tis there,
Again is heard—"Despair! Despair!"
'Tis past—its tones have slowly died
In echoes on the mountain side;
Heard but by him, they rose, they fell,
He knew their fearful meaning well,
And shrinking from the midnight gloom,
As from the shadow of the tomb,
Yet shuddering, turn'd in pale dismay
When broke the dawn's first kindling ray,
And sought, amidst the forest wild,
Some shade where sunbeam never smiled.

Yes! hide thee, guilt!—the laughing morn
Wakes in a heaven of splendour born!
The storms that shook the mountain crest
Have sought their viewless world of rest.
High from his cliffs, with ardent gaze,
Soars the young eagle in the blaze,
Exulting, as he wings his way,
To revel in the fount of day,

And brightly past his banks of vine,
In glory, flows the monarch Rhine;
And joyous peals the vintage song
His wild luxuriant shores along,
As peasant bands, from rock and dell,
Their strains of choral transport swell;
And cliffs of bold fantastic forms,
Aspiring to the realm of storms;
And woods around, and waves below,
Catch the red Orient's deepening glow,
That lends each tower, and convent-spire,
A tinge of its ethereal fire.
Swell high the song of festal hours!
Deck ye the shrine with living flowers!
Let music o'er the waters breathe!
Let beauty twine the bridal wreath!
While she, whose blue eye laughs in light,
Whose cheek with love's own hue is bright,
The fair-hair'd maid of Lindheim's hall,
Wakes to her nuptial festival.
Oh! who hath seen, in dreams that soar
To worlds the soul would fain explore,
When, for her own blest country pining,
Its beauty o'er her thought is shining,
Some form of heaven, whose cloudless eye
Was all one beam of ecstasy!
Whose glorious brow no traces wore
Of guilt, or sorrow known before!
Whose smile, undimm'd by aught of earth,
A sunbeam of immortal birth,
Spoke of bright realms, far distant lying,
Where love and joy are both undying!

E'en thus—a vision of delight,
A beam to gladden mortal sight,
A flower whose head no storm had bow'd,
Whose leaves ne'er droop'd beneath a cloud;
Thus, by the world unstain'd, untried,
Seem'd that belov'd and lovely bride;
A being all too soft and fair,
One breath of earthly woe to bear!
Yet lives there many a lofty mind,
In light and fragile form enshrined;
And oft smooth cheek, and smiling eye,
Hide strength to suffer and to die!
Judge not of woman's heart in hours
That strew her path with summer flowers,
When joy's full cup is mantling high,
When flattery's blandishments are nigh;
Judge her not then! within her breast
Are energies unseen, that rest!
They wait their call—and grief alone
May make the soul's deep secrets known.
Yes! let her smile, 'midst pleasure's train
Leading the reckless and the vain!
Firm on the scaffold she hath stood,
Besprinkled with the martyr's blood;
Her voice the patriot's heart hath steel'd,
Her spirit glow'd on battle-field;
Her courage freed from dungeon's gloom
The captive brooding o'er his doom;
Her faith the fallen monarch saved,
Her love the tyrant's fury braved;
No scene of danger or despair,
But she hath won her triumph there!

Away! nor cloud the festal morn
With thoughts of boding sadness borne!
Far other, lovelier dreams are thine,
Fair daughter of a noble line!
Young Ella! from thy tower, whose height
Hath caught the flush of Eastern light,
Watching, while soft the morning air
Parts on thy brow the sunny hair,
Yon bark, that o'er the calm blue tide
Bears thy loved warrior to his bride—
He, whose high deeds romantic praise
Hath hallow'd with a thousand lays.

He came—that youthful chief—he came
That favour'd lord of love and fame!
His step was hurried—as if one
Who seeks a voice within to shun;
His cheek was varying, and express'd
The conflict of a troubled breast:
His eye was anxious—doubt, and dread,
And a stern grief, might there be read;
Yet all that mark'd his alter'd mien
Seem'd struggling to be still unseen.

With shrinking heart, with nameless fear,
Young Ella met the brow austere,
And the wild look, which seem'd to fly
The timid welcome of her eye.
Was that a lover's gaze, which chill'd
The soul, its awful sadness thrill'd?
A lover's brow, so darkly fraught
With all the heaviest gloom of thought?

She trembled—ne'er to grief inured,
By its dread lessons ne'er matured:
Unused to meet a glance of less
Than all a parent's tenderness,
Shuddering she felt, through every sense,
The death-like faintness of suspense.

High o'er the windings of the flood,
On Lindheim's terraced rocks they stood,
Whence the free sight afar might stray
O'er that imperial river's way,
Which, rushing from its Alpine source,
Makes one long triumph of its course,
Rolling in tranquil grandeur by,
'Midst Nature's noblest pageantry.
But they, o'er that majestic scene,
With clouded brow and anxious mien,
In silence gazed:—for Ella's heart
Fear'd its own terrors to impart;
And he, who vainly strove to hide
His pangs, with all a warrior's pride,
Seem'd gathering courage to unfold
Some fearful tale that must be told.

At length his mien, his voice, obtain'd
A calm, that seem'd by conflicts gain'd,
As thus he spoke—"Yes! gaze a while
On the bright scenes that round thee smile;
For, if thy love be firm and true,
Soon must thou bid their charms adieu!
A fate hangs o'er us, whose decree
Must bear me far from them or thee;

Our path is one of snares and fear,
I lose thee if I linger here!
Droop not, beloved! thy home shall rise
As fair, beneath far distant skies;
As fondly tenderness and truth
Shall cherish there thy rose of youth.
But speak! and when yon hallow'd shrine
Hath heard the vows which make thee mine,
Say, wilt thou fly with me, no more
To tread thine own loved mountain-shore,
But share and soothe, repining not
The bitterness of exile's lot?"

"Ulric! thou know'st how dearly loved
The scenes where first my childhood roved;
The woods, the rocks, that tower supreme
Above our own majestic stream,
The halls where first my heart beat high
To the proud songs of chivalry.
All, all are dear—yet *these* are ties
Affection well may sacrifice;
Loved though they be, where'er thou art,
There is the country of my heart!
Yet, is there one, who, reft of me,
Were lonely as a blasted tree;
One, who still hoped my hand should close
His eyes, in Nature's last repose;
Eve gathers round him—on his brow
Already rests the wintry snow;
His form is bent, his features wear
The deepening lines of age and care,

His faded eye hath lost its fire;
Thou wouldst not tear me from my sire?
Yet tell me all—thy woes impart,
My Ulric! to a faithful heart,
Which sooner far—oh, doubt not this—
Would share *thy* pangs, than others' bliss!"

"Ella, what would'st thou?—'tis a tale
Will make that cheek as marble pale!
Yet what avails it to conceal
All thou too soon must know and feel?
It must, it must be told—prepare,
And nerve that gentle heart to bear—
But I—oh, was it then for *me*
The herald of thy woes to be!
Thy soul's bright calmness to destroy,
And wake thee first from dreams of joy?
Forgive!—I would not ruder tone
Should make the fearful tidings known,
I would not that unpitying eyes
Should coldly watch thine agonies!
Better 'twere mine—that task severe,
To cloud thy breast with grief and fear.

"Hast thou not heard, in legends old,
Wild tales that turn the life-blood cold,
Of those who meet in cave or glen,
Far from the busy walks of men;
Those who mysterious vigils keep,
When earth is wrapt in shades and sleep,
To judge of crimes, like Him on high,
In stillness and in secresy?

Th' unknown avengers, whose decree
'Tis fruitless to resist or flee?
Whose name hath cast a spell of power,
O'er peasant's cot and chieftain's tower?
Thy sire—oh, Ella! hope is fled!
Think of him, mourn him, as the dead!
Their sentence, theirs, hath seal'd his doom,
And thou may'st weep as o'er his tomb!
Yes, weep!—relieve thy heart oppress'd,
Pour forth thy sorrows on my breast!
Thy cheek is cold—thy tearless eye
Seems fix'd in frozen vacancy;
Oh, gaze not thus!—thy silence break,
Speak! if 'tis but in anguish, speak!"

She spoke at length, in accents low,
Of wild and half-indignant woe:
—"*He* doom'd to perish! *he* decreed
By their avenging arm to bleed!
He, the renown'd in holy fight,
The Paynim's scourge, the Christian's might!
Ulric! what mean'st thou?—not a thought
Of that high mind with guilt is fraught!
Say, for which glorious trophy won,
Which deed of martial prowess done;
Which battle-field, in days gone by,
Gain'd by his valour, must he die?
Away! 'tis not *his* lofty name
Their sentence hath consign'd to shame,
'Tis not his life they seek—recall
Thy words, or say he shall not fall!"

Then sprung forth tears, whose blest relief
Gave pleading softness to her grief:
"And wilt thou not, by all the ties
Of our affianced love," she cries,
"By all my soul hath fix'd on thee,
Of cherish'd hope for years to be,
Wilt *thou* not aid him? wilt not thou
Shield his grey head from danger now?
And didst thou not, in childhood's morn,
That saw our young affection born,
Hang round his neck, and climb his knee,
Sharing his parent-smile with me?
Kind, gentle Ulric! best beloved!
Now be thy faith in danger proved!
Though snares and terrors round him wait,
Thou wilt not leave him to his fate!
Turn not away in cold disdain!
—Shall thine own Ella plead in vain?
How art thou changed! and must I bear
That frown, that stern, averted air?
What mean they?"

"Maiden, need'st thou ask?
These features wear no specious mask!
Doth sorrow mark this brow and eye
With characters of mystery?
This—*this* is anguish!—can it be?
And plead'st thou for thy sire to *me*?
Know though thy prayers a death-pang give,
He must not meet my sight—and live!
Well may'st thou shudder!—of the band
Who watch in secret o'er the land,

Whose thousand swords 'tis vain to shun,
Th' unknown, th' unslumbering—I am one!
My arm defend him!—what were *then*
Each vow that binds the souls of men,
Sworn on the cross, and deeply seal'd
By rites that may not be reveal'd?
—A breeze's breath, an echo's tone,
A passing sound, forgot when gone!
Nay, shrink not from me—I would fly,
That he by other hands may die!
What! think'st thou I would live to trace
Abhorrence in that angel-face?
Beside thee should the lover stand,
The father's life-blood on his brand?
No! I have bade my home adieu,
For other scenes mine eyes must view;
Look on me, love! now all is known,
O Ella! must I fly alone?"

But she was changed; scarce heaved her breath
She stood like one prepared for death,
And wept no more; then, casting down
From her fair brows the nuptial crown,
As joy's last vision from her heart,
Cried, with sad firmness, "We must part!
'Tis past—these bridal flowers, so frail
They may not brook one stormy gale,
Survive—too dear as still thou art,
Each hope they imaged—we must part!
One struggle yet—and all is o'er—
We love—and may we meet no more!

Oh! little know'st thou of the power
Affection lends in danger's hour,
To deem that fate should thus divide
My footsteps from a father's side!
Speed thou to other shores—I go
To share his wanderings and his woe;
Where'er his path of thorns may lead,
Whate'er his doom, by Heaven decreed,
If there be guardian powers above,
To nerve the heart of filial love;
If courage may be won by prayer,
Or strength by duty—I can bear!
Farewell!—though in that sound be years
Of blighted hopes and fruitless tears,
Though the soul vibrate to its knell
Of joys departed—yet, farewell!"

Was *this* the maid who seem'd, erewhile,
Born but to meet life's vernal smile?
A being, almost on the wing,
As an embodied breeze of spring?
A child of beauty and of bliss,
Sent from some purer sphere to this,
Not, in her exile, to sustain
The trial of one earthly pain;
But, as a sunbeam, on to move,
Wak'ning all hearts to joy and love?
That airy form, with footsteps free,
And radiant glance—could this be she?
From her fair cheek the rose was gone,
Her eye's blue sparkle thence had flown,

Of all its vivid glow bereft,
Each playful charm her lip had left;
But what were these? on that young face,
Far nobler beauty fill'd their place!
'Twas not the pride that scorns to bend,
Though all the bolts of Heaven descend:
Not the fierce grandeur of despair,
That half exults its fate to dare;
Nor that wild energy which leads
Th' enthusiast to fanatic deeds;
Her mien, by sorrow unsubdued,
Was fix'd in silent fortitude;
Not in its haughty strength elate,
But calmly, mournfully sedate.
'Twas strange, yet lovely to behold
That spirit in so fair a mould,
As if a rose-tree's tender form,
Unbent, unbroke, should meet the storm.

One look she cast, where firmness strove
With the deep pangs of parting love;
One tear a moment in her eye
Dimm'd the pure light of constancy;
And pressing, as to still her heart,
She turn'd in silence to depart.
But Ulric, as to frenzy wrought,
Then started from his trance of thought:
"Stay thee, oh, stay!—it must not be—
All, all were well resign'd for thee!
Stay! till my soul each vow disown,
But those which make me thine alone!

If there be guilt—there is no shrine
More holy than that heart of thine;
There be my crime absolved—I take
The cup of shame for thy dear sake.
Of *shame!* oh no! to virtue true,
Where *thou* art, there is glory too!
Go now! and to thy sire impart,
He hath a shield in Ulric's heart,
And thou a home!—remain, or flee,
In life, in death—I follow thee!"

"There shall not rest one cloud of shame,
O Ulric! on thy lofty name;
There shall not one accusing word
Against thy spotless faith be heard!
Thy path is where the brave rush on,
Thy course must be where palms are won;
Where banners wave, and falchions glare,
Son of the mighty! be thou there!
Think on the glorious names that shine
Along thy sire's majestic line;
Oh, last of that illustrious race!
Thou wert not born to meet disgrace!
Well, well I know each grief, each pain,
Thy spirit nobly could sustain;
E'en I unshrinking see them near,
And what hast thou to do with fear?
But when hath warriors calmly borne
The cold and bitter smile of scorn?
Tis not for thee—thy soul hath force
To cope with all things—but remorse;

And this my brightest thought shall be,
Thou hast not braved its pangs for me.
Go! break thou not one solemn vow ;
Closed be the fearful conflict now;
Go! but forget not how my heart
Still at thy name will proudly start,
When chieftains hear, and minstrels tell,
Thy deeds of glory—fare thee well!"

And thus they parted—why recall
The scene of anguish known to all?
The burst of tears, the blush of pride,
That fain those fruitless tears would hide ;
The lingering look, the last embrace,
Oh! what avails it to retrace?
They parted—in that bitter word
A thousand tones of grief are heard,
Whose deeply-seated echoes rest
In the far cells of every breast;
Who hath not known, who shall not know
That keen, yet most familiar woe?
Where'er affection's home is found,
It meets her on the holy ground ;
The cloud of every summer hour,
The canker-worm of every flower;
Who but hath proved, or yet shall prove,
That mortal agony of love?

The autumn moon slept bright and still
On fading wood and purple hill;
The vintager had hush'd his lay,
The fisher shunn'd the blaze of day,

And silence, o'er each green recess,
Brooded in misty sultriness.
But soon a low and measured sound
Broke on the deep repose around;
From Lindheim's towers a glancing oar
Bade the stream ripple to the shore.
Sweet was that sound of waves which parted
The fond, the true, the noble-hearted;
And smoothly seem'd the bark to glide,
And brightly flow'd the reckless tide,
Though, mingling with its current, fell
The last warm tears of love's farewell.

Part II.

Sweet is the gloom of forest shades,
Their pillar'd walks and dim arcades,
With all the thousand flowers that blow,
A waste of loveliness, below.
To him whose soul the world would fly,
For Nature's lonely majesty:
To bard, when wrapt in mighty themes,
To lover, lost in fairy dreams,
To hermit, whose prophetic thought
By fits a gleam of heaven hath caught,
And, in the visions of his rest,
Held bright communion with the blest;
'Tis sweet, but solemn—there alike
Silence and sound with awe can strike.

The deep Eolian murmur made
By sighing breeze and rustling shade,
And cavern'd fountain gushing nigh,
And wild-bee's plaintive lullaby,
Or the dead stillness of the bowers,
When dark the summer-tempest lowers;
When silent Nature seems to wait
The gathering Thunder's voice of fate,
When the aspen scarcely waves in air,
And the clouds collect for the lightning's glare,
Each, each alike is awful there,
And thrills the soul with feelings high,
As some majestic harmony.

But she, the maid, whose footsteps traced
Each green retreat, in breathless haste,
Young Ella linger'd not, to hear
The wood-notes, lost on mourner's ear;
The shivering leaf, the breeze's play,
The fountain's gush, the wild-bird's lay;
These charm not now—her sire she sought,
With trembling frame, with anxious thought,
And, starting, if a forest deer,
But moved the rustling branches near,
First felt that innocence may fear.

She reach'd a lone and shadowy dell,
Where the free sunbeam never fell;
'Twas twilight there at summer-noon,
Deep night beneath the harvest-moon,
And scarce might one bright star be seen
Gleaming the tangled boughs between;

For many a giant rock around,
Dark, in terrific grandeur, frown'd,
And the ancient oaks, that waved on high,
Shut out each glimpse of the blessed sky.
There the cold spring, in its shadowy cave,
Ne'er to Heaven's beam one sparkle gave,
And the wild-flower, on its brink that grew,
Caught not from day one glowing hue.

'Twas said, some fearful deed untold,
Had stain'd that scene in days of old;
Tradition o'er the haunt had thrown
A shade yet deeper than its own,
And still, amidst th' umbrageous gloom,
Perchance above some victim's tomb,
O'ergrown with ivy and with moss,
There stood a rudely-sculptured Cross,
Which haply silent record bore,
Of guilt and penitence of yore.

Who by that holy sign was kneeling,
With brow unutter'd pangs revealing,
Hands clasp'd convulsively in prayer,
And lifted eyes and streaming hair,
And cheek, all pale as marble mould,
Seen by the moonbeam's radiance cold?
Was it some image of despair,
Still fix'd that stamp of woe to bear?
—Oh! ne'er could Art her forms have wrought,
To speak such agonies of thought!
Those death-like features gave to view
A mortal's pangs, too deep and true!

Starting he rose, with frenzied eye,
As Ella's hurried step drew nigh;
He turn'd, with aspect darkly wild,
Trembling he stood—before his child!
On, with a burst of tears, she sprung,
And to her father's bosom clung.

"Away! what seek'st thou here?" he cried,
"Art thou not now thine Ulric's bride?
Hence, leave me, leave me to await,
In solitude, the storm of Fate;
Thou know'st not what my doom may be
Ere evening comes in peace to thee."

"My father! shall the joyous throng
Swell high for me the bridal song?
Shall the gay nuptial board be spread,
The festal garland bind my head,
And thou, in grief, in peril, roam,
And make the wilderness thy home?
No! I am here, with thee to share
All suffering mortal strength may bear;
And, oh! whate'er thy foes decree,
In life, in death, in chains, or free;
Well, well I feel, in thee secure,
Thy heart and hand alike are pure!"

Then was there meaning in his look
Which deep that trusting spirit shook;
So wildly did each glance express
The strife of shame and bitterness,

As thus he spoke: "Fond dreams, oh hence!
Is this the mien of Innocence?
This furrow'd brow, this restless eye,
Read thou this fearful tale—and fly!
Is it enough? or must I seek
For *words*, the tale of guilt to speak?
Then be it so—I will not doom
Thy youth to wither in its bloom;
I will not see thy tender frame
Bow'd to the earth with fear and shame.
No! though I teach thee to abhor
The sire, so fondly loved before;
Though the dread effort rend my breast,
Yet shalt thou leave me and be blest!
Oh! bitter penance! thou wilt turn
Away in horror and in scorn;
Thy looks, that still through all the past
Affection's gentlest beams have cast,
As lightning on my heart will fall,
And I must mark and bear it all!
Yet though of life's best ties bereaved,
Thou shalt not, must not be deceived!
I linger—let me speed the tale,
Ere voice, and thought, and memory fail.
Why should I falter thus, to tell
What Heaven so long hath known too well?
Yes! though from mortal sight conceal'd,
There hath a brother's blood appeal'd!
He died—'twas not where banners wave,
And war-steeds trample on the brave;
He died—it was in Holy Land;
Yet fell he not by Paynim hand;

Beside the Desert's fount it stood,
Tinging the clear cold wave with blood;
And e'en when viewless, by the fear
Curdling my veins, I knew 'twas near!
—*Was* near!—I feel th' unearthly thrill,
Its power is on my spirit still!
A mystic influence, undefined,
The spell, the shadow of my mind!

"Wilt thou yet linger?—time speeds on;
One last farewell, and then begone!
Unclasp the hands that shade thy brow,
And let me read thine aspect *now!*
No! stay thee yet, and learn the meed
Heaven's justice to my crime decreed.
Slow came the day that broke my chain,
But I at length was free again;
And freedom brings a burst of joy,
E'en guilt itself can scarce destroy.
I thought upon my own fair towers,
My native Rhine's gay vineyard bowers,
And, in a father's visions, press'd
Thee and thy brother to my breast.

"'Twas but in visions—canst thou yet
Recall the moment when we met?
Thy step to greet me lightly sprung,
Thy arms around me fondly clung;
Scarce aught than infant-seraph less,
Seem'd thy pure childhood's loveliness;
But he was gone—that son, for whom
I rush'd on guilt's eternal doom,

He for whose sake alone were given
My peace on earth, my hope in Heaven,
He met me not.—A ruthless band,
Whose name with terror fill'd the land,
Fierce outlaws of the wood and wild
Had reft the father of his child.
Foes to my race, the hate they nursed,
Full on that cherish'd scion burst.
Unknown his fate.—No parent nigh,
My boy! my first-born! didst thou die?
Or did they spare thee for a life
Of shame, of rapine, and of strife?
Livest thou, unfriended, unallied,
A wanderer, lost without a guide?
Oh! to thy fate's mysterious gloom
Blest were the darkness of the tomb!

"Ella! 'tis done—my guilty heart
Before thee all unveil'd—depart!
Few pangs 'twill cost thee now to fly
From one so stain'd, so lost as I;
Yet peace to thine untainted breast,
E'en though it hate me—be thou blest!
Farewell! thou shalt not linger here;
E'en now th' avenger may be near:
Where'er I turn, the foe, the snare,
The dagger, may be ambush'd there;
One hour—and haply all is o'er,
And we must meet on earth no more;
No, nor beyond!—to those pure skies
Where thou shalt be, I may not rise;

How welcome were each pang below,
If guilt might be atoned by woe!
Think'st thou I yet may be forgiven?
Shall prayers unclose the gate of Heaven?
Oh! if it yet avail to plead,
If judgment be not yet decreed,
Our hearts shall blend their suppliant cry,
Till pardon shall be seal'd on high!
Yet, yet I shrink!—will Mercy shed
Her dews upon this fallen head?
—Kneel, Ella, kneel! till full and free
Descend forgiveness, won by thee!"

They knelt:—before the Cross, that sign
Of love eternal and divine;
That symbol, which so long hath stood
A rock of strength, on time's dark flood,
Clasp'd by despairing hands and laved
By the warm tears of nations saved;
In one deep prayer their spirits blent,
The guilty and the innocent;
Youth, pure as if from Heaven its birth,
Age, soil'd with every stain of earth,
Knelt, offering up one heart, one cry,
One sacrifice of agony.

Oh! blest, though bitter be their source,
Though dark the fountain of remorse,
Blest are the tears which pour from thence,
Th' atoning stream of penitence!
And let not pity check the tide
By which the heart is purified;

Let not vain comfort turn its course
Or timid love repress its force!
Go! bind the flood, whose waves expand,
To bear luxuriance o'er the land;
Forbid the life-restoring rains
To fall on Afric's burning plains;
Close up the fount that gush'd to cheer
The pilgrim o'er the waste who trode;
But check thou not one holy tear,
Which Penitence devotes to God!

Through scenes so lone the wild-deer ne'er
Was roused by huntsman's bugle there;
So rude, that scarce might human eye
Sustain their dread sublimity;
So awful, that the timid swain,
Nurtured amidst their dark domain,
Had peopled, with unearthly forms,
Their mists, their forests, and their storms;
She, whose blue eye, of laughing light,
Once made each festal scene more bright;
Whose voice in song of joy was sweetest,
Whose step in dance of mirth was fleetest.
By torrent-wave, and mountain-brow,
Is wandering as an outcast now,
To share with Lindheim's fallen chief,
His shame, his terror, and his grief.

Hast thou not mark'd the ruin's flower,
That blooms in solitary grace,
And, faithful to its mouldering tower,
Waves in the banner's place?

From those grey haunts renown hath pass'd,
Time wins his heritage at last;
This day of glory hath gone by,
With all its pomp and minstrelsy;
Yet still the flower of golden hues
There loves its fragrance to diffuse,
To fallen and forsaken things
With constancy unalter'd clings,
And, smiling o'er the wreck of state,
With beauty clothes the desolate.

E'en such was she, the fair-hair'd maid,
In all her light of youth array'd,
Forsaking every joy below,
To soothe a guilty parent's woe,
And clinging thus, in beauty's prime,
To the dark ruin made by crime.
Oh! ne'er did Heaven's propitious eyes
Smile on a purer sacrifice;
Ne'er did young love, at duty's shrine,
More nobly brighter hopes resign!
O'er her own pangs she brooded not,
Nor sunk beneath her bitter lot;
No! that pure spirit's lofty worth
Still rose more buoyantly from earth,
And drew from an eternal source
Its gentle, yet triumphant force;
Roused by affliction's chastening might
To energies more calmly bright,
Like the wild harp of airy sigh,
Woke by the storm to harmony!

He that in mountain holds hath sought
A refuge for unconquer'd thought,
A charter'd home, where Freedom's child
Might rear her altars in the wild,
And fix her quenchless torch on high,
A beacon for Eternity;
Or they, whose martyr-spirits wage
Proud war with Persecution's rage,
And to the deserts bear the faith
That bids them smile on chains and death;
Well may *they* draw, from all around,
Of grandeur clothed in form and sound,
From the deep power of earth and sky,
Wild nature's might of majesty,
Strong energies, immortal fires,
High hopes, magnificent desires!

But dark, terrific, and austere,
To *him* doth Nature's mien appear,
Who, 'midst her wilds, would seek repose
From guilty pangs and vengeful foes!
For him the wind hath music dread,
A dirge-like voice that mourns the dead;
The forest's whisper breathes a tone,
Appalling, as from worlds unknown;
The mystic gloom of wood and cave
Is fill'd with shadows of the grave;
In noon's deep calm the sunbeams dart
A blaze that seems to search his heart;
The pure, eternal stars of night,
Upbraid him with their silent light,

And the dread spirit, which pervades,
And hallows earth's most lonely shades,
In every scene, in every hour,
Surrounds him with chastising power,
With nameless fear his soul to thrill,
Heard, felt, acknowledged, present still!

'Twas the chilly close of an Autumn day,
And the leaves fell thick o'er the wanderers' way,
The rustling pines, with a hollow sound,
Foretold the tempest gathering round,
And the skirts of the western clouds were spread
With a tinge of wild and stormy red,
That seem'd, through the twilight forest bowers
Like the glare of a city's blazing towers;
But they, who far from cities fled,
And shrunk from the print of human tread,
Had reach'd a desert-scene unknown,
So strangely wild, so deeply lone,
That a nameless feeling, unconfess'd
And undefined, their souls oppress'd.
Rocks piled on rocks, around them hurl'd,
Lay like the ruins of a world,
Left by an earthquake's final throes
In deep and desolate repose;
Things of eternity whose forms
Bore record of ten thousand storms!
While, rearing its colossal crest
In sullen grandeur o'er the rest,
One, like a pillar, vast and rude,
Stood monarch of the solitude.

Perchance by Roman conqueror's hand
Th' enduring monument was plann'd;
Or Odin's sons, in days gone by,
Had shaped its rough immensity,
To rear, 'midst mountain, rock, and wood,
A temple meet for rites of blood.
But they were gone, who might have told
That secret of the times of old,
And there, in silent scorn it frown'd,
O'er all its vast coevals round.
Darkly those giant masses lower'd,
Countless and motionless they tower'd;
No wild-flower o'er their summits hung,
No fountain from their caverns sprung;
Yet ever on the wanderers' ear
Murmur'd a sound of waters near,
With music deep of lulling falls,
And louder gush, at intervals.
Unknown its source—nor spring nor stream
Caught the red sunset's lingering gleam,
But ceaseless, from its hidden caves,
Arose that mystic voice of waves.[1]
Yet bosom'd 'midst that savage scene,
One chosen spot of gentler mien
Gave promise to the pilgrim's eye
Of shelter from the tempest nigh.
Glad sight! the ivied cross it bore,
The sculptured saint that crown'd its door;
Less welcome now were monarch's dome,
Than that low cell, some hermit's home.
Thither the outcasts bent their way,
By the last lingering gleam of day,

When from a cavern'd rock, which cast
Deep shadows o'er them as they pass'd,
A form, a warrior-form of might,
As from earth's bosom, sprung to sight.
His port was lofty—yet the heart
Shrunk from him with recoiling start;
His mien was youthful—yet his face
Had nought of youth's ingenuous grace;
Nor chivalrous, nor tender thought,
Its traces on his brow had wrought;
Yet dwelt no fierceness in his eye,
But calm and cold severity,
A spirit haughtily austere,
Stranger to pity as to fear.
It seem'd as pride had thrown a veil
O'er that dark brow and visage pale,
Leaving the searcher nought to guess,
All was so fix'd and passionless.

He spoke—and they who heard the tone
Felt, deeply felt, all hope was flown.
" I've sought thee far in forest bowers,
I've sought thee long in peopled towers,
I've borne the dagger of th' UNKNOWN
Through scenes explored by me alone;
My search is closed—nor toils, nor fears,
Repel the servant of the Seers;
We meet—'tis vain to strive or fly,
Albert of Lindheim—thou must die!"

Then with clasp'd hands the fair-hair'd maid
Sunk at his feet and wildly pray'd:—

" Stay, stay thee! sheath that lifted steel!
Oh! thou art human, and canst feel!
Hear me! if e'er 'twas thine to prove
The blessing of a parent's love;
By thine own father's hoary hair,
By her who gave thee being, spare!
Did they not, o'er thy infant years,
Keep watch, in sleepless hopes and fears!
Young warrior! thou wilt heed my prayers,
As thou would'st hope for grace to theirs!"

But cold th' Avenger's look remain'd,
His brow its rigid calm maintain'd:
" Maiden! 'tis vain—my bosom ne'er
Was conscious of a parent's care;
The nurture of my infant years
Froze in my soul the source of tears;
'Tis not for me to pause or melt,
Or feel as happier hearts have felt.
Away! the hour of fate goes by,
Thy prayers are fruitless—he must die!"

" Rise, Ella! rise," with steadfast brow
The father spoke; unshrinking now,
As if from heaven a martyr's strength
Had settled on his soul at length;
" Kneel thou no more, my noble child,
Thou by no taint of guilt defiled;
Kneel not to man!—for mortal prayer,
Oh! when did mortal vengeance spare?
Since hope of earthly aid is flown,
Lift thy pure hands to Heaven alone,

And know, to calm thy suffering heart,
My spirit is resign'd to part,
Trusting in Him, who reads and knows
This guilty breast, with all its woes.
Rise! I would bless thee once again,
Be still, be firm—for all is vain!"

And she *was* still—she heard him not,
Her prayers were hush'd—her pangs forgot;
All thought, all memory pass'd away,
Silent and motionless she lay,
In a brief death, a blest suspense,
Alike of agony and sense.
She saw not when the dagger gleam'd
In the last red light from the west that stream'd;
She mark'd not when the life-blood's flow
Came rushing to the mortal blow;
While, unresisting, sunk her sire,
Yet gather'd firmness to expire,
Mingling a warrior's courage high,
With a penitent's humility.
And o'er him there th' Avenger stood,
And watch'd the victim's ebbing blood,
Still calm, as if his faithful hand
Had but obey'd some just command,
Some power, whose stern, yet righteous will,
He deem'd it virtue to fulfil,
And triumph'd, when the palm was won,
For duty's task austerely done.

But a feeling dread, and undefin'd,
A mystic presage of the mind,

With strange and sudden impulse ran
Chill through the heart of the dying man,
And his thoughts found voice, and his bosom breath,
And it seem'd as fear suspended death,
And Nature from her terrors drew
Fresh energy, and vigour new.

" Thou said'st thy lonely bosom ne'er
Was conscious of a parent's care;
Thou saidst thy lot, in childhood's years,
Froze in thy soul the source of tears:
The time will come, when thou, with me,
The judgment-throne of God wilt see.
Oh! by thy hopes of mercy, then,
By His blest love who died for men,
By each dread rite, and shrine, and vow,
Avenger! I adjure thee now!
To him who bleeds beneath thy steel,
Thy lineage and thy name reveal,
And haste thee! for his closing ear
Hath little more on earth to hear—
Haste! for the spirit, almost flown,
Is lingering for thy words alone."

Then first a shade, resembling fear,
Pass'd o'er th' Avenger's mien austere;
A nameless awe his features cross'd,
Soon in their haughty coldness lost.

" What wouldst thou? Ask the rock and wild,
And bid them tell thee of their child!

Ask the rude winds, and angry skies,
Whose tempests were his lullabies!
His chambers were the cave and wood,
His fosterers men of wrath and blood;
Outcasts alike of earth and heaven,
By wrongs to desperation driven!
Who, in their pupil, now could trace
The features of a nobler race?
Yet such was mine!—if one who cast
A look of anguish o'er the past,
Bore faithful record on the day,
When penitent in death he lay.
But still deep shades my prospects veil,
He died—and told but half the tale;
With him it sleeps—I only know
Enough for stern and silent woe,
For vain ambition's deep regret,
For hopes deceived, deceiving yet,
For dreams of pride that vainly tell
How high a lot had suited well
The heir of some illustrious line,
Heroes and chieftains of the Rhine!"

Then swift through Albert's bosom pass'd
One pang, the keenest and the last,
Ere with his spirit fled the fears,
The sorrows, and the pangs of years;
And, while his grey hairs swept the dust,
Faltering he murmur'd, "Heaven is just!
For thee that deed of guilt was done,
By thee avenged, my Son! my Son!"

The day was closed— the moonbeam shed
Light on the living and the dead,
And as through rolling clouds it broke,
Young Ella from her trance awoke—
Awoke to bear, to feel, to know
E'en more than all an orphan's woe.
Oh! ne'er did moonbeam's light serene
With beauty clothe a sadder scene!
There, cold in death, the father slept,
There, pale in woe, the daughter wept!
Yes! *she* might weep—but one stood nigh,
With horror in his tearless eye,
That eye which ne'er again shall close
In the deep quiet of repose;
No more on earth beholding aught,
Save one dread vision, stamp'd on thought.
But, lost in grief, the Orphan Maid
His deeper woe had scarce survey'd,
Till his wild voice reveal'd a tale,
Which seem'd to bid the Heavens turn pale!
He call'd her, "Sister!" and the word
In anguish breathed, in terror heard,
Reveal'd enough—all else were weak,
That sound a thousand pangs could speak.
He knelt beside that breathless clay,
Which, fix'd in utter stillness, lay—
Knelt till his soul imbibed each trace,
Each line of that unconscious face;
Knelt, till his eye could bear no more,
Those marble features to explore;
Then, starting, turning, as to shun
The image thus by Memory won,

A wild farewell to her he bade,
Who by the dead in silence pray'd,
And, frenzied by his bitter doom,
Fled thence—to find all earth a tomb!

Days pass'd away—and Rhine's fair shore
In the light of summer smiled once more;
The vines were purpling on the hill,
And the corn-fields waved in the sunshine still:
There came a bark up the noble stream,
With pennons that shed a golden gleam,
With the flash of arms, and the voice of song,
Gliding triumphantly along;
For warrior-forms were glittering there,
Whose plumes waved light in the whispering air;
And as the tones of oar and wave
Their measured cadence mingling gave,
'Twas thus th' exulting chorus rose,
While many an echo swell'd the close:—

From the fields where dead and dying,
On their battle-bier are lying,
Where the blood unstanch'd is gushing,
Where the steed uncheck'd is rushing,
Trampling o'er the noble-hearted,
Ere the spirit yet be parted;
Where each breath of Heaven is swaying
Knightly plumes and banners playing,
And the clarion's music swelling
Calls the vulture from his dwelling;
He comes, with trophies worthy of his line,
The son of heroes, Ulric of the Rhine!

To his own fair woods, enclosing
Vales in sunny peace reposing,
Where his native stream is laving
Banks, with golden harvests waving,
And the summer light is sleeping
On the grape, through tendrils peeping;
To the halls where harps are ringing,
Bards the praise of warriors singing,
Graceful footsteps bounding fleetly,
Joyous voices mingling sweetly;
Where the cheek of mirth is glowing,
And the wine-cup brightly flowing,
He comes, with trophies worthy of his line,
The son of heroes, Ulric of the Rhine.

He came—he sought his Ella's bowers,
He traversed Lindheim's lonely towers;
But voice and footstep thence had fled,
As from the dwellings of the dead,
And the sounds of human joy and woe
Gave place to the moan of the wave below.
The banner still the rampart crown'd,
But the tall rank grass waved thick around;
Still hung the arms of a race gone by,
In the blazon'd halls of their ancestry
But they caught no more, at fall of night,
The wavering flash of the torch's light;
And they sent their echoes forth no more,
To the Minnesinger's[2] tuneful lore,
For the hands that touch'd the harp were gone,
And the hearts were cold that loved its tone;

And the soul of the chord lay mute and still,
Save when the wild wind bade it thrill,
And woke from its depths a dream-like moan,
For life, and power, and beauty gone.

The warrior turn'd from that silent scene,
Where a voice of woe had welcome been,
And his heart was heavy with boding thought,
As the forest-paths alone he sought.
He reach'd a convent's fane, that stood
Deep bosom'd in luxuriant wood;
Still, solemn, fair—it seem'd a spot
Where earthly care might be all forgot,
And sounds and dreams of Heaven alone,
To musing spirit might be known.

And sweet e'en then were the sounds that rose
On the holy and profound repose.
Oh! they came o'er the warrior's breast,
Like a glorious anthem of the blest;
And fear and sorrow died away,
Before the full, majestic lay.
He enter'd the secluded fane,
Which sent forth that inspiring strain;
He gazed—the hallow'd pile's array
Was that of some high festal day;
Wreaths of all hues its pillars bound,
Flowers of all scents were strew'd around;
The rose exhaled its fragrant sigh,
Blest on the altar to smile and die;
And a fragrant cloud from the censer's breath
Half hid the sacred pomp beneath;

And still the peal of choral song
Swell'd the resounding aisles along;
Wakening, in its triumphant flow,
Deep echoes from the graves below.

Why, from its woodland birthplace torn,
Doth summer's rose that scene adorn?
Why breathes the incense to the sky?
Why swells th' exulting harmony?
—And see'st thou not yon form, so light,
It seems half floating on the sight,
As if the whisper of a gale,
That did but wave its snowy veil,
Might bear it from the earth afar,
A lovely, but receding star?
Know, that devotion's shrine, e'en now,
Receives that youthful vestal's vow,
For this, high hymns, sweet odours rise,
A jubilee of sacrifice!
Mark yet a moment! from her brow
Yon priest shall lift the veil of snow,
Ere yet a darker mantle hide
The charms to Heaven thus sanctified;
Stay thee! and catch their parting gleam,
That ne'er shall fade from memory's dream.
A moment! oh! to Ulric's soul,
Poised between hope and fear's control,
What slow, unmeasured hours went by,
Ere yet suspense grew certainty;
It came at length—once more that face
Reveal'd to man its mournful grace;

A sunbeam on its features fell,
As if to bear the world's farewell;
And doubt was o'er—his heart grew chill—
Twas she—though changed—'twas Ella still!
Though now her once-rejoicing mien,
Was deeply, mournfully serene;
Though clouds her eye's blue lustre shaded,
And the young cheek beneath had faded,
Well, well he knew the form, which cast
Light on his soul through all the past!
'Twas with him on the battle plain,
'Twas with him on the stormy main,
'Twas in his visions, when the shield
Pillow'd his head on tented field;
'Twas a bright beam that led him on
Where'er a triumph might be won,
In danger as in glory nigh,
An angel-guide to victory!

She caught his pale bewilder'd gaze
Of grief half lost in fix'd amaze—
Was it some vain illusion, wrought
By frenzy of impassion'd thought?
Some phantom, such as Grief hath power
To summon, in her wandering hour?
No! it was he! the lost, the mourn'd,
Too deeply loved, too late return'd!

A fever'd blush, a sudden start,
Spoke the last weakness of her heart,
'Twas vanquish'd soon—the hectic red
A moment flush'd her cheek, and fled.

Once more serene—her steadfast eye
Look'd up as to Eternity;
Then gaz'd on Ulric with an air,
That said—the home of Love is *there!*

Yes! *there* alone it smiled for him,
Whose eye before that look grew dim;
Not long 'twas his e'en *thus* to view
The beauty of its calm adieu;
Soon o'er those features, brightly pale,
Was cast th' impenetrable veil;
And, if one human sigh were given
By the pure bosom vow'd to Heaven,
'Twas lost, as many a murmur'd sound
Of grief, "not loud, but deep," is drown'd.
In hymns of joy, which proudly rise,
To tell the calm untroubled skies,
That earth hath banish'd care and woe,
And man holds festivals below!

NOTES.

Note 1, page 69, line 22.

The original of the scene here described is presented by the mountain called the Feldberg, in the Bergstrasse:—"Des masses énormes de rochers, entassées l'une sur l'autre depuis le sommet de la montagne jusqu'à son pied, viennent y présenter un aspect superbe qu' aucune description ne saurait rendre. Ce furent, dit-on, des géans, qui en se livrant un combat du haut des montagnes, lancèrent les uns sur les autres ces énormes masses de rochers. On arrive, avec beaucoup de peine, jusqu'au sommet du Feldberg, en suivant un sentier qui passe à côté de cette chaine de rochers. On entend continuellement un bruit sourd, qui parait venir d'un ruisseau au dessous des rochers; mais on a beau decendre, en se glissant à travers les ouvertures qui s'y trouvent, on ne découvrira jamais le ruisseau. La colonne, dite Riesensäule, se trouve un peu plus haut qu'à la moitie de la montagne; c'est un bloc de granit taillé, d'une longueur de 30 pieds et d'un diamétre de 4 pieds. Il y a plus de probabilité de croire que les anciens Germains voulaient faire de ce bloc une colonne pour l'ériger en l'honneur de leur dieu Odin, que de prétendre, comme le fort plusieurs auteurs, que les Romains aient eu le dessein de la transporter dans leur capitale. On voit un peu plus haut un autre bloc d'une forme presque carrée, qu' on appelle Riesenaltar (autel du géant) qui, à en juger par sa grosseur et sa forme, était destiné à servir de piédestal à la colonne susdite."
—*Manuel pour les Voyageurs sur le Rhin.*

Note 2, page 77, line 28.

Minnesingers (bards of love), the appellation of the German minstrels in the Middle Ages.

SUPERSTITION AND REVELATION,

AN UNFINISHED POEM.

I.

Beings of brighter worlds! that rise at times
As phantoms, with ideal beauty fraught,
In those brief visions of celestial climes,
Which pass, like sunbeams, o'er the realms of thought,
Dwell ye around us?—are ye hovering nigh,
Throned on the cloud, or buoyant in the air?
And in deep solitudes, where human eye
Can trace no step, Immortals! are ye there?
Oh! who can tell?—what power, but Death alone
Can lift the mystic veil that shades the world unknown?

II.

But Earth hath seen the days, ere yet the flowers
Of Eden wither'd, when reveal'd ye shone,
In all your brightness, 'midst those holy bowers—
Holy, but not unfading, as your own!
While He, the child of that primeval soil,
With you its paths in high communion trode,
His glory yet undimm'd by guilt or toil,
And beaming in the image of his God.

And his pure spirit glowing from the sky,
Exulting in its light, a spark of Deity.

III.

Then, haply, mortal and celestial lays,
Mingling their tones, from Nature's temple rose,
When nought but that majestic song of praise
Broke on the sanctity of night's repose,
With music since unheard: and man might trace,
By stream and vale, in deep embow'ring shade,
Devotion's first and loveliest dwelling-place,
The footsteps of th' Omnipotent, who made
That spot a shrine, where youthful nature cast
Her consecrated wealth, rejoicing as He pass'd.

IV.

Short were those days, and soon, O sons of Heaven!
Your aspect changed for man; in that dread hour,
When from his paradise the alien driven,
Beheld your forms in angry splendour tower,
Guarding the clime where he no more might dwell,
With meteor-swords: he saw the living flame,
And his first cry of misery was—"Farewell!"
His heart's first anguish, exile: he became
A pilgrim on the earth, whose children's lot
Is still for happier lands to pine—and reach them not.

V.

Where now the chosen bowers that once beheld
Delight and Love their first bright Sabbath keep?
From all its founts the world of waters swell'd,
And wrapt them in the mantle of the deep!

For He, to whom the elements are slaves,
In wrath unchain'd the oceans of the cloud,
And heaved the abyss beneath; till waves on waves
Folded creation in their mighty shroud,
Then left the earth a solitude, o'erspread
With its own awful wreck—a desert of the dead.

VI.

But onward flow'd life's busy course again,
And rolling ages with them bore away—
As to be lost amidst the boundless main,
Rich orient streams their golden sands convey—
The hallow'd lore of old—the guiding light
Left by tradition to the sons of earth,
And the blest memory of each sacred rite,
Known in the region of their father's birth,
When in each breeze around his fair abode
Whisper'd a seraph's voice, or lived the breath of God.

VII.

Who hath not seen, what time the orb of day,
Cinctured with glory, seeks the ocean's breast,
A thousand clouds, all glowing in his ray,
Catching brief splendour from the purple west?
So round thy parting steps, fair Truth! awhile
With borrow'd hues unnumber'd phantoms shone;
And Superstition, from thy lingering smile,
Caught a faint glow of beauty not her own,
Blending her rites with thine—while yet afar
Thine eye's last radiance beam'd, a slow-receding star.

VIII.

Yet still one stream was pure—one sever'd shrine
Was fed with holier fire, by chosen hands,
And sounds, and dreams, and impulses divine,
Were in the dwellings of the patriarch bands.
There still the father to his child bequeath'd
The sacred torch of never-dying flame;
There still Devotion's suppliant accents breathed
The One adored and everlasting Name,
And angel guests would linger and repose
Where those primeval tents amid their palm-trees rose.

IX.

But far o'er earth the apostate wanderers bore
Their alien rites:—for them, by fount or shade,
Nor voice, nor vision, holy as of yore,
In thrilling whispers to the soul convey'd
High inspiration: yet in every clime,
Those sons of doubt and error fondly sought
With beings, in their essence more sublime,
To hold communion of mysterious thought;
On some dread power in trembling hope to lean,
And hear in every wind the accents of th' Unseen.

X.

Yes! we have need to bid our hopes repose
On some protecting influence; here confined,
Life hath no healing balm for mortal woes,
Earth is too narrow for th' immortal mind.
Our spirits burn to mingle with the day.
As exiles panting for their native coast,

Yet lured by every wild-flower from their way,
And shrinking from the gulf that must be cross'd;
Death hovers round us—in the zephyr's sigh,
As in the storm, he comes—and lo! Eternity!

XI.

As one left lonely on the desert sands
Of burning Afric, where, without a guide,
He gazes as the pathless waste expands—
Around, beyond, interminably wide;
While the red haze, presaging the Simoom,
Obscures the fierce resplendence of the sky,
Or suns of blasting light perchance illume
The glistening Serab* which illudes his eye;
Such was the wanderer Man, in ages flown,
Kneeling in doubt and fear before the dread Unknown.

XII.

His thoughts explored the past—and where were they,
The chiefs of men, the mighty ones gone by?
He turn'd—a boundless void before him lay,
Wrapp'd in the shadows of futurity.
How knew the child of Nature that the flame
He felt within him, struggling to ascend,
Should perish not with that terrestrial frame
Doom'd with the earth on which it moved, to blend?
How, when affliction bade his spirit bleed,
If 'twere a Father's love or Tyrant's wrath decreed?

* *Serab*, mirage.

XIII.

Oh! marvel not, if then he sought to trace
In all sublimities of sight and sound,
In rushing winds that wander through all space,
Or 'midst deep woods, with holy gloom embrown'd,
The oracles of Fate! or if the train
Of floating forms, that throng the world of sleep,
And sounds that vibrate on the slumberer's brain,
When mortal voices rest in stillness deep,
Were deem'd mysterious revelations, sent
From viewless powers, the lords of each dread element.

XIV.

Was not wild Nature, in that elder-time,
Clothed with a deeper power?—earth's wandering race,
Exploring realms of solitude sublime,
Not as *we* see, beheld her awful face!
Art had not tamed the mighty scenes which met
Their searching eyes; unpeopled kingdoms lay
In savage pomp before them—all was yet
Silent and vast, but not as in decay,
And the bright daystar, from his burning throne,
Look'd o'er a thousand shores, untrodden, voiceless, lone.

XV.

The forests in their dark luxuriance waved,
With all their swell of strange Æolian sound;
The fearful deep, sole region ne'er enslaved,
Heaved, in its pomp of terror, darkly round;

Then, brooding o'er the images, imprest
By forms of grandeur thronging on his eye,
And faint traditions, guarded in his breast,
'Midst dim remembrances of infancy,
Man shaped unearthly presences, in dreams,
Peopling each wilder haunt of mountains, groves, and streams.

XVI.

Then bled the victim—then in every shade
Of rock or turf arose the votive shrine;
Fear bow'd before the phantoms she portray'd,
And Nature teem'd with many a mystic sign.
Meteors, and storms, and thunders! ye whose course
E'en yet is awful to th' enlighten'd eye,
As, wildly rushing from your secret source,
Your sounding chariot sweeps the realms on high,
Then o'er the earth prophetic gloom ye cast,
And the wide nations gazed, and trembled as ye pass'd.

XVII.

But you, ye stars! in distant glory burning,
Nurtured with flame, bright altars of the sky!
To whose far climes the spirit, vainly turning,
Would pierce the secrets of infinity—
To you the heart, bereft of other light,
Its first deep homage paid, on Eastern plains,
Where Day hath terrors, but majestic Night,
Calm in her pomp, magnificently reigns,
Cloudless and silent, circled with the race
Of *some unnumber'd* orbs, that light the depths of *space.*

XVIII.

Shine on! and brightly plead for erring thought,
Whose wing, unaided in its course, explored
The wide creation, and beholding nought
Like your eternal beauty, then adored
Its living splendours; deeming them inform'd
By natures temper'd with a holier fire—
Pure beings, with ethereal effluence warm'd,
Who to the source of spirit might aspire,
And mortal prayers benignantly convey
To some presiding Power, more awful far than they.

XIX.

Guides o'er the desert and the deep! to you
The seaman turn'd, rejoicing at the helm,
When from the regions of empyreal blue
Ye pour'd soft radiance o'er the ocean-realm;
To you the dweller of the plains address'd
Vain prayers, that called the clouds and dews your own;
To you the shepherd, on the mountain's crest,
Kindled the fires that far through midnight shone,
As earth would light up all her hills, to vie
With your immortal host, and image back the sky.

XX.

Hail to the queen of heaven! her silvery crown
Serenely wearing, o'er her high domain
She walks in brightness, looking cloudless down,
As if to smile on her terrestrial reign.

Earth should be hush'd in slumber—but the night
Calls forth her worshippers ; the feast is spread,
On hoary Lebanon's umbrageous height
The shrine is raised, the rich libation shed
To her, whose beams illume those cedar-shades
Faintly as Nature's light the 'wilder'd soul pervades.

XXI.

But when *thine* orb, all earth's rich hues restoring,
Came forth, O sun! in majesty supreme,
Still from thy pure exhaustless fountain, pouring
Beauty and life in each triumphant beam,
Through thine own east what joyous rites prevail'd!
What choral songs re-echo'd! while thy fire
Shone o'er its thousand altars, and exhaled
The precious incense of each odorous pyre,
Heap'd with the richest balms of spicy vales,
And aromatic woods that scent the Arabian gales.

XXII.

Yet not with Saba's fragrant wealth alone,
Balsam and myrrh, the votive pile was strew'd;
For the dark children of the burning zone
Drew frenzy from thy fervors, and bedew'd
With their own blood thy shrine ; while that wild scene,
Haply with pitying eye, thine angel view'd,
And, though with glory mantled, and serene
In his own fulness of beatitude,
Yet mourn'd for those whose spirits from thy ray
Caught not *one transient* spark of intellectual day.

XXIII.

But earth had deeper stains: ethereal powers!
Benignant seraphs! wont to leave the skies,
And hold high converse, 'midst his native bowers,
With the once-glorious son of Paradise,
Look'd ye from heaven in sadness? were your strains
Of choral praise suspended in dismay,
When the polluted shrine of Syria's plains,
With clouds of incense dimm'd the blaze of day?
Or did ye veil indignantly your eyes,
While demons hail'd the pomp of human sacrifice?

XXIV.

And well the powers of evil might rejoice,
When rose from Tophet's vale the exulting cry,
And, deaf to Nature's supplicating voice,
The frantic mother bore her child to die!
Around her vainly clung his feeble hands
With sacred instinct: love hath lost its sway,
While ruthless zeal the sacrifice demands,
And the fires blaze, impatient for their prey.
Let not his shrieks reveal the dreadful tale!
Well may the drum's loud peal o'erpower an infant's wail!

XXV.

A voice of sorrow! not from thence it rose;
'Twas not the childless mother—Syrian maids,
Where with red wave the mountain streamlet flows,
Keep tearful vigil in their native shades.
With dirge and plaint the cedar-groves resound,
Each rock's deep echo for Adonis mourns:

Weep for the dead!—away! the lost is found,
To life and love the buried god returns!
Then wakes the timbrel—then the forests ring,
And shouts of frenzied joy are on each breeze's wing!

XXVI.

But fill'd with holier joy the Persian stood,
In silent reverence, on the mountain's brow,
At early dayspring, while the expanding flood
Of radiance burst around, above, below—
Bright, boundless as eternity: he gazed
Till his full soul, imbibing heaven, o'erflow'd
In worship of th' Invisible, and praised
In thee, O Sun! the symbol and abode
Of life, and power, and excellence; the throne
Where dwelt the Unapproach'd, resplendently alone.*

XXVII.

What if his thoughts, with erring fondness, gave
Mysterious sanctity to things which wear
Th' Eternal's impress?—if the living wave,
The circling heavens, the free and boundless air—

* At an earlier stage in the composition of this poem, the following stanza was here inserted:—

'Nor rose the Magian's hymn, sublimely swelling
In full-toned homage to the source of flame,
From fabric rear'd by man—the gorgeous dwelling
Of such bright idol-forms as art could frame;
He rear'd no temple, bade no walls contain
The breath of incense, or the voice of prayer;
But made the boundless universe his fane,
The rocks his altar-stone, adoring there
The Being whose Omnipotence pervades
All deserts and all depths, and hallows loneliest shades'

If the pure founts of everlasting flame,
Deep in his country's hallow'd vales enshrined,
And the bright stars maintain'd a silent claim
To love and homage from his awestruck mind?
Still with his spirit dwelt a lofty dream
Of uncreated Power, far, far o'er these supreme.

XXVIII.

And with that faith was conquest. He whose name
To Judah's harp of prophecy had rung;
He, of whose yet unborn and distant fame
The mighty voice of Inspiration sung,
He came, the victor Cyrus!—as he pass'd,
Thrones to his footstep rock'd, and monarchs lay
Suppliant and clothed with dust; while nations cast
Their ancient idols down before *his* way,
Who, in majestic march, from shore to shore,
The quenchless flame revered by Persia's children bore.

* * * * * * *

THE CARAVAN IN THE DESERTS.

Call it not loneliness, to dwell
In woodland shade or hermit dell,
Or the deep forest to explore,
Or wander Alpine regions o'er;
For Nature there all joyous reigns,
And fills with life her wild domains:
A bird's light wing may break the air
A wave, a leaf, may murmur there:
A bee the mountain flowers may seek,
A chamois bound from peak to peak;
An eagle, rushing to the sky,
Wake the deep echoes with his cry;
And still some sound, thy heart to cheer,
Some voice, though not of man is near.
But he, whose weary step hath traced
Mysterious Afric's awful waste—
Whose eye Arabia's wilds hath view'd,
Can tell thee what is solitude!
It is, to traverse lifeless plains,
Where everlasting stillness reigns,
And billowy sands and dazzling sky,
Seem boundless as infinity!
It is, to sink, with speechless dread,
In scenes unmeet for mortal tread,

Sever'd from earthly being's trace,
Alone, amidst eternal space!
'Tis noon—and fearfully profound,
Silence is on the desert round;
Alone she reigns, above, beneath,
With all the attributes of death!
No bird the blazing heaven may dare,
No insect bide the scorching air;
The ostrich, though of sun-born race,
Seeks a more shelter'd dwelling-place;
The lion slumbers in his lair,
The serpent shuns the noontide glare:
But slowly wind the patient train
Of camels o'er the blasted plain,
Where they and man may brave alone
The terrors of the burning zone.

Faint not, O pilgrims! though on high,
As a volcano, flame the sky;
Shrink not, though as a furnace glow
The dark-red seas of sand below;
Though not a shadow save your own,
Across the dread expanse is thrown;
Mark! where your feverish lips to lave,
Wide spreads the fresh transparent wave!
Urge your tired camels on, and take
Your rest beside yon glistening lake;
Thence, haply, cooler gales may spring,
And fan your brows with lighter wing.
Lo! nearer now, its glassy tide,
Reflects the date-tree on its side—

Speed on! pure draughts and genial air,
And verdant shade, await you there.
Oh glimpse of Heaven! to him unknown,
That hath not trod the burning zone!
Forward they press—they gaze dismay'd—
The waters of the desert fade!
Melting to vapours that elude
The eye, the lip, they vainly woo'd.*
What meteor comes?—a purple haze
Hath half obscured the noontide rays:†
Onward it moves in swift career,
A blush upon the atmosphere;
Haste, haste! avert th' impending doom,
Fall prostrate! 'tis the dread Simoom!
Bow down your faces—till the blast
On its red wing of flame hath pass'd,
Far bearing o'er the sandy wave,
The viewless Angel of the Grave.

It came—'tis vanish'd—but hath left
The wanderers e'en of hope bereft;
The ardent heart, the vigorous frame,
Pride, courage, strength, its power could tame
Faint with despondence, worn with toil,
They sink upon the burning soil,
Resign'd, amidst those realms of gloom,
To find their deathbed and their tomb.‡

* The mirage, or vapour assuming the appearance of water.
† See the description of the Simoom in Bruce's Travels.
‡ The extreme languor and despondence produced by the Simoom, even when its effects are not fatal, have been described by many travellers.

But onward still!—yon distant spot
Of verdure can deceive you not;
Yon palms, which tremulously seem'd
Reflected as the waters gleam'd,
Along th' horizon's verge display'd,
Still rear their slender colonnade—
A landmark, guiding o'er the plain
The Caravan's exhausted train.
Fair is that little Isle of Bliss
The desert's emerald oasis!
A rainbow on the torrent's wave,
A gem embosom'd in the grave,
A sunbeam on a stormy day
Its beauty's image might convey!
'Beauty, in horror's lap that sleeps,
While silence round her vigil keeps.
—Rest, weary pilgrims! calmly laid
To slumber in th' acacia shade:
Rest, where the shrubs your camels bruise,
Their aromatic breath diffuse;
Where softer light the sunbeams pour
Through the tall palm and sycamore;
And the rich date luxuriant spreads
Its pendant clusters o'er your heads.
Nature once more, to seal your eyes,
Murmurs her sweetest lullabies;
Again each heart the music hails
Of rustling leaves and sighing gales,
And oh! to Afric's child how dear
The voice of fountains gushing near!
Sweet be your slumbers! and your dreams
Of waving groves and rippling streams!

Far be the serpent's venom'd coil
From the brief respite won by toil;
Far be the awful shades of those
Who deep beneath the sands repose—
The hosts, to whom the desert's breath
Bore swift and stern the call of death.
Sleep! nor may scorching blast invade
The freshness of the acacia shade,
But gales of heaven your spirits bless,
With life's best balm—Forgetfulness!
Till night from many an urn diffuse
The treasures of her world of dews.

The day hath closed—the moon on high
Walks in her cloudless majesty.
A thousand stars to Afric's heaven
Serene magnificence have given;
Pure beacons of the sky, whose flame
Shines forth eternally the same.
Blest be their beams, whose holy light
Shall guide the camel's footsteps right,
And lead, as with a track divine,
The pilgrim to his prophet's shrine!
—Rise! bid your Isle of Palms adieu!
Again your lonely march pursue,
While airs of night are freshly blowing,
And heavens with softer beauty glowing.
—Tis silence all: the solemn scene
Wears, at each step, a ruder mien;
For giant-rocks, at distance piled,
Cast their deep shadows o'er the wild.

Darkly they rise—what eye hath view'd
The caverns of their solitude?
Away! within those awful cells
The savage lord of Afric dwells!
Heard ye his voice?—the lion's roar
Swells as when billows break on shore.
Well may the camel shake with fear,
And the steed pant—his foe is near;
Haste! light the torch, bid watchfires throw,
Far o'er the waste, a ruddy glow;
Keep vigil—guard the bright array,
Of flames that scare him from his prey;
Within their magic circle press,
O wanderers of the wilderness!
Heap high the pile, and by its blaze
Tell the wild tales of elder days.
Arabia's wond'rous lore—that dwells
On warrior deeds, and wizard spells;
Enchanted domes, 'mid scenes like these,
Rising to vanish with the breeze;
Gardens, whose fruits are gems, that shed
Their light where mortal may not tread,
And spirits, o'er whose pearly halls
Th' eternal billow heaves and falls.
—With charms like these, of mystic power,
Watchers! beguile the midnight hour.
—Slowly that hour hath roll'd away,
And star by star withdraws its ray.
Dark children of the sun! again
Your own rich orient hails his reign.
He comes, but veil'd—with sanguine glare
Tinging the mists that load the air;

Sounds of dismay, and signs of flame,
Th' approaching hurricane proclaim.
'Tis death's red banner streams on high—
Fly to the rocks for shelter!—fly!
Lo! dark'ning o'er the fiery skies,
The pillars of the desert rise!
On, in terrific grandeur wheeling,
A giant-host, the heavens concealing,
They move, like mighty genii forms,
Towering immense 'midst clouds and storms.
Who shall escape?—with awful force
The whirlwind bears them on their course;
They join, they rush resistless on,
The landmarks of the plain are gone;
The steps, the forms, from earth effaced,
Of those who trod the burning waste!
All whelm'd, all hush'd!—none left to bear
Sad record how they perish'd there!
No stone their tale of death shall tell—
The desert guards its mysteries well;
And o'er th' unfathom'd sandy deep,
Where low their nameless relics sleep,
Oft shall the future pilgrim tread,
Nor know his steps are on the dead.

MARIUS AMONGST THE RUINS OF CARTHAGE.

["Marius, during the time of his exile, seeking refuge in Africa, had landed at Carthage, when an officer, sent by the Roman governor of Africa, came and thus addressed him:—"Marius, I come from the Prætor Sextilius, to tell you that he forbids you to set foot in Africa. If you obey not, he will support the Senate's decree, and treat you as a public enemy." Marius, upon hearing this, was struck dumb with grief and indignation. He uttered not a word for some time, but regarded the officer with a menacing aspect. At length the officer enquired what answer he should carry to the governor. "Go and tell him," said the unfortunate man, with a sigh, "that thou hast seen the exiled Marius sitting on the ruins of Carthage."—See PLUTARCH.]

'Twas noon, and Afric's dazzling sun on high,
With fierce resplendence fill'd th' unclouded sky;
No zephyr waved the palm's majestic head,
And smooth alike the seas and deserts spread;
While desolate, beneath a blaze of light,
Silent and lonely as at dead of night,
The wreck of Carthage lay. Her prostrate fanes
Had strew'd their precious marble o'er the plains;
Dark weeds and grass the column had o'ergrown,
The lizard bask'd upon the altar-stone;

Whelm'd by the ruins of their own abodes,
Had sunk the forms of heroes and of gods;
While near, dread offspring of the burning day!
Coil'd 'midst forsaken halls, the serpent lay.

There came an exile, long by fate pursued,
To shelter in that awful solitude.
Well did that wanderer's high yet faded mien,
Suit the sad grandeur of the desert-scene;
Shadow'd, not veil'd, by locks of wintry snow,
Pride sat, still mighty, on his furrow'd brow;
Time had not quench'd the terrors of his eye,
Nor tamed his glance of fierce ascendency;
While the deep meaning of his features told,
Ages of thought had o'er his spirit roll'd,
Nor dimm'd the fire that might not be controll'd;
And still did power invest his stately form,
Shatter'd, but yet unconquer'd, by the storm.

But slow his step—and where, not yet o'er-
thrown,
Still tower'd a pillar 'midst the waste alone,
Faint with long toil, his weary limbs he laid,
To slumber in its solitary shade.
He slept—and darkly, on his brief repose,
Th' indignant genius of the scene arose.
Clouds robed his dim unearthly form, and spread
Mysterious gloom around his crownless head,
Crownless, but regal still. With stern disdain,
The kingly shadow seem'd to lift his chain,
Gazed on the palm, his ancient sceptre torn,
And his eye kindled with immortal scorn!

"And sleep'st thou, Roman?" cry'd his voice austere;
"Shall son of Latium find a refuge *here?*
Awake! arise! to speed the hour of Fate,
When Rome shall fall, as Carthage desolate!
Go! with her children's flower, the free, the brave,
People the silent chambers of the grave;
So shall the course of ages yet to be,
More swiftly waft the day, avenging me!

"Yes, from the awful gulf of years to come,
I hear a voice that prophesies her doom;
I see the trophies of her pride decay,
And her long line of triumphs pass away,
Lost in the depths of time—while sinks the star
That led her march of heroes from afar!
Lo! from the frozen forests of the north,
The sons of slaughter pour in myriads forth!
Who shall awake the mighty?—will thy woe,
City of thrones! disturb the realms below?
Call on the dead to hear thee! let thy cries
Summon their shadowy legions to arise,
Array the ghosts of conquerors on thy walls!
—Barbarians revel in their ancient halls,
And their lost children bend the subject knee,
'Midst the proud tombs and trophies of the free.
Bird of the sun! dread eagle! borne on high,
A creature of the empyreal—Thou, whose eye
Was lightning to the earth—whose pinion waved
In haughty triumph o'er a world enslaved;
Sink from thy Heavens! for glory's noon is o'er,
And rushing storms shall bear thee on no more!

Closed is thy regal course—thy crest is torn,
And thy plume banish'd from the realms of morn.
The shaft hath reach'd thee!—rest with chiefs and kings,
Who conquer'd in the shadow of thy wings;
Sleep! while thy foes exult around their prey,
And share thy glorious heritage of day!
"But darker years shall mingle with the past,
And deeper vengeance shall be mine at last.
O'er the seven hills I see destruction spread,
And Empire's widow veils with dust her head!
Her gods forsake each desolated shrine,
Her temples moulder to the earth, like mine:
'Midst fallen palaces she sits alone,
Calling heroic shades from ages gone,
Or bids the nations 'midst her deserts wait
To learn the fearful oracles of Fate!

"Still sleep'st thou, Roman? Son of Victory, rise!
Wake to obey th' avenging Destinies!
Shed by thy mandate, soon thy country's blood
Shall swell and darken Tiber's yellow flood!
My children's manès call—awake! prepare
The feast they claim!—exult in Rome's despair!
Be thine ear closed against her suppliant cries,
Bid thy soul triumph in her agonies;
Let carnage revel, e'en her shrines among,
Spare not the valiant, pity not the young!
Haste! o'er her hills the sword's libation shed,
And wreak the curse of Carthage on her head!"

The vision flies—a mortal step is near,
Whose echoes vibrate on the slumberer's ear;
He starts, he wakes to woe—before him stands
Th' unwelcome messenger of harsh commands,
Whose falt'ring accents tell the exiled chief,
To seek on other shores a home for grief.
—Silent the wanderer sat—but on his cheek
The burning glow far more than words might speak;
And, from the kindling of his eye, there broke
Language, where all th' indignant soul awoke,
Till his deep thought found voice—then, calmly stern,
And sovereign in despair, he cried, "Return!
Tell him who sent thee hither, thou hast seen
Marius, the exile, rest where Carthage once hath been!"

SONG.

FOUNDED ON AN ARABIAN ANECDOTE.

AWAY! though still thy sword is red
With life-blood from my sire,
No drop of thine may now be shed
To quench my bosom's fire;
Though on my heart 'twould fall more blest,
Than dews upon the desert's breast.

I've sought thee 'midst the sons of men,
Through the wide city's fanes;
I've sought thee by the lion's den,
O'er pathless, boundless plains;
No step that mark'd the burning waste,
But mine its lonely course hath traced.

Thy name hath been a baleful spell,
O'er my dark spirit cast;
No thought may dream, no words may tell,
What there unseen hath pass'd:
This wither'd cheek, this faded eye,
Are seals of thee—behold! and fly!

Hath not my cup for thee been pour'd,
Beneath the palm-tree's shade?
Hath not soft sleep thy frame restored,
Within my dwelling laid?
What though unknown—yet who shall rest
Secure—if not the Arab's guest?

Haste thee! and leave my threshold-floor,
  Inviolate and pure!
Let not thy presence tempt me more,
  —Man may not thus endure!
Away! I bear a fetter'd arm,
A heart that burns—but must not harm!

Begone! outstrip the swift gazelle!
  The wind in speed subdue!
Fear cannot fly so swift, so well,
  As vengeance shall pursue;
And hate, like love, in parting pain,
Smiles o'er *one* hope—we meet again!

To-morrow—and th' avenger's hand,
  The warrior's dart is free!
E'en now, no spot in all thy land,
  Save *this*, had shelter'd thee,
Let blood the monarch's hall profane,—
The Arab's tent must bear no stain!

Fly! may the desert's fiery blast
  Avoid thy secret way!
And sternly, till thy steps be past,
  Its whirlwinds sleep to-day!
I would not that thy doom should be
Assign'd by Heaven to aught but me.

ALP-HORN SONG.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF TIECK.

WHAT dost thou here, brave Swiss?
Forgett'st thou thus thy native clime—
The lovely land of thy bright spring-time?
The land of thy home, with its free delights,
And fresh green valleys and mountain heights?
Can the stranger's yield thee bliss?

What welcome cheers thee now?
Dar'st thou lift thine eye to gaze around?
Where are the peaks, with their snow-wreaths crown'd?
Where is the song, on the wild winds borne,
Or the ringing peal of the joyous horn,
Or the peasant's fearless brow?

But thy spirit is far away!
Where a greeting waits thee in kindred eyes,
Where the white Alps look through the sunny skies,
With the low senn-cabins, and pastures free,
And the sparkling blue of the glacier-sea,
And the summits, clothed with day!

Back, noble child of Tell!
Back to the wild and the silent glen,
And the frugal board of peasant-men!
Dost thou seek the friend, the loved one, here?—
Away! not a true Swiss heart is near,
Against thine own to swell!

TRANSLATIONS FROM HORACE.

TO VENUS.

BOOK 1ST, ODE 30TH.

"O Venus, Regina Cnidi Paphique," &c.

Oh! leave thine own loved isle,
Bright Queen of Cyprus and the Paphian shores!
And here in Glycera's fair temple smile,
Where vows and incense lavishly she pours.

Waft here thy glowing son;
Bring Hermes; let the Nymphs thy path surround,
And youth unlovely till thy gifts be won,
And the light Graces with the zone unbound.

TO HIS ATTENDANT.

BOOK 1ST, ODE 38TH.

"Persicos odi, puer, apparatus," &c.

I hate the Persian's costly pride—
The wreaths with bands of linden tied—
These, boy, delight me not;
Nor where the lingering roses bide,
Seek thou for me the spot.

For me be nought but myrtle twined—
The modest myrtle, sweet to bind
Alike thy brows and mine;
While thus I quaff the bowl, reclined
Beneath th' o'erarching vine.

TO DELIUS.

BOOK 2D, ODE 3D.

"Æquam memento rebus in arduis," &c.

FIRM be thy soul!—serene in power,
When adverse fortune clouds the sky;
Undazzled by the triumph's hour,
Since, Delius, thou must die!

Alike, if still to grief resign'd,
Or if, through festal days, 'tis thine
To quaff, in grassy haunts reclined,
The old Falernian wine:

Haunts where the silvery poplar-boughs
Love with the pine's to blend on high,
And some clear fountain brightly flows
In graceful windings by.

There be the rose with beauty fraught,
So soon to fade, so brilliant now,
There be the wine, the odours brought,
While time and fate allow!

For thou, resigning to thine heir
Thy halls, thy bowers, thy treasured store,
Must leave that home, those woodlands fair,
On yellow Tiber's shore.

What then avails it if thou trace
From Inachus thy glorious line?
Or, sprung from some ignoble race,
If not a roof be thine?

Since the dread lot for all must leap
Forth from the dark revolving urn,
And we must tempt the gloomy deep,
Whence exiles ne'er return.

TO THE FOUNTAIN OF BANDUSIA.

BOOK 3D, ODE 13TH.

"Oh! Fons Bandusiæ, splendidior vitro," &c.

OH! worthy fragrant gifts of flowers and wine,
Bandusian fount, than crystal far more bright!
To-morrow shall a sportive kid be thine,
Whose forehead swells with horns of infant might:
Ev'n now of love and war he dreams in vain,
Doom'd with his blood thy gelid wave to stain.

Let the red dog-star burn!—his scorching beam,
Fierce in resplendence shall molest not thee!
Still shelter'd from his rays, thy banks, fair stream,
To the wild flock around thee wandering free,

And the tired oxen from the furrow'd field
The genial freshness of their breath shall yield.

And thou, bright fount! ennobled and renown'd
Shalt by thy poet's votive song be made;
Thou and the oak with deathless verdure crown'd,
Whose boughs, a pendant canopy, o'ershade
Those hollow rocks, whence, murmuring many a tale,
Thy chiming waters pour upon the vale.

TO FAUNUS.

BOOK 3D, ODE 18TH.

"Faune, Nympharum fugentium amator," &c.

FAUNUS, who lov'st the flying nymphs to chase,
O let thy steps with genial influence tread
My sunny fields, and be thy fostering grace,
Soft on my nursling groves and borders, shed.

If, at the mellow closing of the year
A tender kid in sacrifice be thine;
Nor fail the liberal bowls to Venus dear;
Nor clouds of incense to thine antique shrine.

Joyous each flock in meadow herbage plays,
When the December feast returns to thee;
Calmly the ox along the pasture strays,
With festal villagers from toil set free.

Then from the wolf no more the lambs retreat,
  Then shower the woods to thee their foliage round;
And the glad labourer triumphs that his feet
  In triple dance have struck the hated ground.

THE CROSS OF THE SOUTH.

[The beautiful constellation of the Cross is seen only in the southern hemisphere. The following lines are supposed to be addressed to it by a Spanish traveller in South America.]

In the silence and grandeur of midnight I tread,
Where savannahs, in boundless magnificence, spread,
And bearing sublimely their snow-wreaths on high,
The far Cordilleras unite with the sky.

The fir-tree waves o'er me, the fire-flies' red light
With its quick-glancing splendour illumines the night;
And I read in each tint of the skies and the earth,
How distant my steps from the land of my birth.

But to thee, as thy lode-stars resplendently burn
In their clear depths of blue, with devotion I turn,
Bright Cross of the South! and beholding thee shine,
Scarce regret the loved land of the olive and vine.

Thou recallest the ages when first o'er the main
My fathers unfolded the ensign of Spain,
And planted their faith in the regions that see
Its unperishing symbol emblazon'd in thee.

How oft in their course o'er the oceans unknown,
Where all was mysterious, and awful, and lone,
Hath their spirit been cheer'd by thy light, when the deep
Reflected its brilliance in tremulous sleep!

As the vision that rose to the Lord of the world,*
When first his bright banner of faith was unfurl'd;
Even such, to the heroes of Spain, when their prow
Made the billows the path of their glory, wert thou.

And to me, as I traversed the world of the west,
Through deserts of beauty in stillness that rest;
By forests and rivers untamed in their pride,
Thy hues have a language, thy course is a guide.

Shine on—my own land is a far distant spot,
And the stars of thy sphere can enlighten it not;
And the eyes that I love, though e'en now they may be
O'er the firmament wandering, can gaze not on thee!

But thou to my thoughts art a pure-blazing shrine,
A fount of bright hopes, and of visions divine;
And my soul, as an eagle exulting and free,
Soars high o'er the Andes to mingle with thee.

* Constantine.

THE SLEEPER OF MARATHON.

I LAY upon the solemn plain,
And by the funeral mound,
Where those who died not there in vain,
Their place of sleep had found.

'Twas silent where the free blood gush'd,
When Persia came array'd—
So many a voice had there been hush'd,
So many a footstep stay'd.

I slumber'd on the lonely spot
So sanctified by death:
I slumber'd—but my rest was not
As theirs who lay beneath.

For on my dreams, that shadowy hour,
They rose—the chainless dead—
All arm'd they sprang, in joy, in power
Up from their grassy bed.

I saw their spears, on that red field,
Flash as in time gone by—
Chased to the seas without his shield,
I saw the Persian fly.

I woke—the sudden trumpet's blast
Call'd to another fight—
From visions of our glorious past,
Who doth not wake in might?

TO MISS F. A. L. ON HER BIRTHDAY.

WHAT wish can Friendship form for thee
What brighter star invoke to shine?—
Thy path from every thorn is free,
And every rose is thine!

Life hath no purer joy in store,
Time hath no sorrow to efface;
Hope cannot paint one blessing more
Than memory can retrace!

Some hearts a boding fear might own,
Had Fate to *them* thy portion given,
Since many an eye by tears alone,
Is taught to gaze on Heaven!

And there are virtues oft conceal'd,
Till roused by anguish from repose,
As odorous trees no balm will yield,
Till from their wounds it flows.

But fear not *thou* the lesson fraught
With Sorrow's chast'ning power to know;
Thou need'st not thus be sternly taught,
"To melt at others' woe."

Then still, with heart as blest, as warm,
Rejoice thou in thy lot on earth:
Ah! why should Virtue dread the *storm*,
If *sunbeams* prove her worth?

WRITTEN IN THE FIRST LEAF OF THE ALBUM OF THE SAME.

WHAT first should consecrate as thine,
The volume, destined to be fraught
With many a sweet and playful line,
With many a pure and pious thought?

It should be, what a loftier strain
Perchance less meetly would impart;
What never yet was pour'd in vain,—
The blessing of a grateful heart—

For kindness, which hath soothed the hour
Of anxious grief, of weary pain,
And oft, with its beguiling power,
Taught languid Hope to smile again;

Long shall that fervent blessing rest
On thee and thine, and heavenwards borne,
Call down such peace to soothe *thy* breast,
As *thou* would'st bear to all that mourn.

TO THE SAME—ON THE DEATH OF HER MOTHER.

Say not 'tis fruitless, nature's holy tear,
Shed by affection o'er a parent's bier!
More blest than dew on Hermon's brow that falls,
Each drop to life some latent virtue calls;
Awakes some purer hope, ordain'd to rise,
By earthly sorrow strengthen'd for the skies,
Till the sad heart, whose pangs exalt its love,
With its lost treasure, seeks a home—above.

But grief will claim her hour,—and He, whose eye
Looks pitying down on nature's agony,
He, in whose love the righteous calmly sleep,
Who bids us hope, forbids us not to weep!
He, too, hath wept—and sacred be the woes
Once borne by him, their inmost source who knows,
Searches each wound, and bids His Spirit bring
Celestial healing on its dove-like wing!

And who but He shall soothe, when one dread stroke,
Ties, that were fibres of the soul, hath broke?
Oh! well may those, yet lingering here, deplore
The vanish'd light, that cheers their path no more!
Th' Almighty hand, which many a blessing dealt,
Sends its keen arrows not to be unfelt!

By fire and storm, Heaven tries the Christian's
worth,
And joy departs, to wean us from the earth,
Where still too long, with beings born to die,
Time hath dominion o'er Eternity.

Yet not the less, o'er all the heart hath lost,
Shall Faith rejoice, when Nature grieves the most;
Then comes her triumph! through the shadowy
gloom,
Her star in glory rises from the tomb,
Mounts to the day-spring, leaves the cloud below,
And gilds the tears that cease not yet to flow!
Yes, all is o'er! fear, doubt, suspense are fled,
Let brighter thoughts be with the virtuous dead!
The final ordeal of the soul is past,
And the pale brow is seal'd to Heaven at last!*

And thou, loved spirit! for the skies mature,
Steadfast in faith, in meek devotion pure;
Thou that didst make the home thy presence blest,
Bright with the sunshine of thy gentle breast,
Where peace a holy dwelling-place had found,
Whence beam'd her smile benignantly around;
Thou, that to bosoms widow'd and bereft
Dear, precious records of thy worth hast left,
The treasured gem of sorrowing hearts to be,
Till Heaven recall surviving love to thee!—

* "Till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads."— *Revelations.*

O cherish'd and revered! fond memory well
On thee, with sacred, sad delight, may dwell!
So pure, so blest thy life, that death alone
Could make more perfect happiness thine own;
He came—thy cup of joy, serenely bright,
Full to the last, still flow'd in cloudless light;
He came—an angel, bearing from on high
The all it wanted—Immortality!

FROM THE ITALIAN OF GARCILASSO DE LA VEGA.

Divine Eliza!—since the sapphire sky
Thou measur'st now on angel wings, and feet
Sandall'd with immortality—oh why
Of me forgetful!—Wherefore not entreat
To hurry on the time when I shall see
The veil of mortal being rent in twain,
And smile that I am free?

In the third circle of that happy land
Shall we not seek together, hand in hand,
Another lovelier landscape, a new plain,
Other romantic streams and mountains blue,
And other vales, and a new shady shore,
When I may rest, and ever in my view
Keep thee, without the terror and surprise
Of being sunder'd more!

FROM THE ITALIAN OF SANNAZARO.

Oh! pure and blessed soul
That, from thy clay's control
Escaped, hast sought and found thy native sphere,
And from thy crystal throne
Look'st down, with smiles alone,
On this vain scene of mortal hope and fear;

Thy happy feet have trod
The starry spangled road,
Celestial flocks by field and fountain guiding,
And from their erring track
Thou charm'st thy shepherds back,
With the soft music of thy gentle chiding,

O! who shall Death withstand—
Death, whose impartial hand
Levels the lowest plant and loftiest pine!
When shall our ears again
Drink in so sweet a strain,
Our eyes behold so fair a form as thine!

APPEARANCE OF THE SPIRIT OF THE CAPE TO VASCO DE GAMA.

(TRANSLATED FROM THE FIFTH BOOK OF THE LUSIAD OF CAMOENS.)

PROPITIOUS winds our daring bark impell'd,
O'er seas which mortal ne'er till then beheld,
When as one eve, devoid of care, we stood
Watching the prow glide swiftly through the flood,
High o'er our heads arose a cloud so vast,
O'er sea and heaven a fearful shade it cast:
Awful, immense, it came! so thick, so drear,
Its gloomy grandeur chill'd our hearts with fear,
And the dark billow heaved with distant roar,
Hoarse, as if bursting on some rocky shore.

Thrill'd with amaze, I cried, "Supernal Power!
What mean the omens of this threatening hour?
What the dread mystery of this ocean-clime,
So darkly grand, so fearfully sublime?"
Scarce had I spoke, when lo! a mighty form,
Tower'd through the gathering shadows of the storm;
Of rude proportions and gigantic size,
Dark features, rugged beard, and deep-sunk eyes;
Fierce was his gesture, and his tresses flew,
Sable his lips, and earthly pale his hue.

Well may I tell thee, that his limbs and height,
In vast dimensions and stupendous might,
Surpass'd that wonder, once the sculptor's boast,
The proud Colossus of the Rhodian coast.
Deep was his voice, in hollow tones he spoke,
As if from ocean's inmost caves they broke;
And but that form to view, that voice to hear,
Spread o'er our flesh and hair cold deadly thrills of fear.

"Oh! daring band," he cried, "far, far more bold
Than all whose deeds recording fame has told;
Adventurous spirits! whom no bounds of fear
Can teach one pause in rapine's fierce career;
Since, bursting thus the barriers of the main,
Ye dare to violate my lonely reign,
Where, till this moment, from the birth of time,
No sail e'er broke the solitude sublime:
Since thus ye pierce the veil by Nature thrown
O'er the dark secrets of the deep Unknown,
Ne'er yet reveal'd to aught of mortal birth,
Howe'er supreme in power, unmatch'd in worth;
Hear from my lips what chastisements of fate,
Rash, bold intruders! on your course await!
What countless perils, woes of darkest hue,
Haunt the vast main and shores your arms must
yet subdue!

Know that o'er every bark, whose fearless helm,
Invades, like yours, this wide mysterious realm,
Unmeasured ills my arm in wrath shall pour,
And guard with storms my own terrific shore!
And on the fleet, which first presumes to brave
The dangers throned on this tempestuous wave,

Shall vengeance burst, ere yet a warning fear
Have time to prophesy destruction near!

"Yes, desperate band! if right my hopes divine,
Revenge, fierce, full, unequall'd, shall be mine!
Urge your bold prow, pursue your venturous way,
Pain, Havoc, Ruin, wait their destined prey!
And your proud vessels, year by year, shall find,
(If no false dreams delude my prescient mind),
My wrath so dread in many a fatal storm,
Death shall be deem'd misfortune's mildest form.

* * * * * *

"Lo! where my victim comes!—of noble birth,
Of cultured genius, and exalted worth,
With her,* his best beloved, in all her charms,
Pride of his heart, and treasure of his arms!
From foaming waves, from raging winds they fly,
Spared for revenge, reserved for agony!
Oh! dark the fate that calls them from their home,
On this rude shore, my savage reign, to roam,
And sternly saves them from a billowy tomb,
For woes more exquisite, more dreadful doom!
—Yes! he shall see the offspring, loved in vain,
Pierced with keen famine, die in lingering pain;
Shall see fierce Caffres every garment tear
From her, the soft, the idolized, the fair;
Shall see those limbs of Nature's finest mould,
Bare to the sultry sun, or midnight-cold,
And, in long wanderings o'er a desert land
Those tender feet imprint the scorching sand.

* Don Emmanuel de Sonza and his wife, Leonora de Sa.

"Yet more, yet deeper woe, shall those behold,
Who live through toils unequall'd and untold!
On the wild shore, beneath the burning sky,
The hapless pair, exhausted, sink to die!
Bedew the rock with tears of pain intense,
Of bitterest anguish, thrilling every sense,
Till in one last embrace, with mortal throes,
Their struggling spirits mount from anguish to repose!"

As the dark phantom sternly thus portray'd
Our future ills, in Horror's deepest shade,—
"Who then art *thou?*" I cried, "dread being, tell
Each sense thus bending in amazement's spell?"
—With fearful shriek, far echoing o'er the tide,
Writhing his lips and eyes, he thus replied—
"Behold the genius of that secret shore,
Where the wind rages, and the billows roar;
That stormy Cape, for ages mine alone,
To Pompey, Strabo, Pliny, all unknown!
Far to the southern pole my throne extends,
That hidden rock, which Afric's region ends.
Behold that spirit, whose avenging might,
Whose fiercest wrath your daring deeds excite."

* * * * *

Thus having said, with strange, terrific cries,
The giant-spectre vanish'd from our eyes;
In sable clouds dissolved—while far around,
Dark ocean's heaving realms his parting yells resound!

A DIRGE.

WEEP for the early lost!—
How many flowers were mingled in the crown
Thus, with the lovely, to the grave gone down,
E'en when life promised most,
How many hopes have wither'd—they that bow
To Heaven's dread will, feel all its mysteries now.

Did the young mother's eye,
Behold her child, and close upon the day,
Ere from its glance th' awakening spirit's ray
In sunshine could reply?
—Then look for clouds to dim the fairest morn!
Oh! strong is faith, if wo like this be borne.

For there is hush'd on earth
A voice of gladness—there is veil'd a face,
Whose parting leaves a dark and silent place,
By the once-joyous hearth.
A smile hath pass'd, which fill'd its home with light
A soul, whose beauty made that smile so bright!

But there *is* power with faith!
Power, e'en though nature, o'er the untimely grave
Must weep, when God resumes the gem He gave;
For sorrow comes of Death,

And with a yearning heart we linger on,
When they, whose glance unlock'd its founts, are
gone!

But glory from the dust,
And praise to Him, the merciful, for those
On whose bright memory love may still repose,
With an immortal trust!
Praise for the dead, who leave us, when they part,
Such hope as she hath left—"the pure in heart."

1823.

THE MAREMMA.

["NELLO DELLA PIETRA had espoused a lady of noble family at Sienna, named Madonna Pia. Her beauty was the admiration of Tuscany, and excited in the heart of her husband a jealousy, which, exasperated by false reports and groundless suspicions, at length drove him to the desperate resolution of Othello. It is difficult to decide whether the lady was quite innocent, but so Dante represents her. Her husband brought her into the Maremma, which, then as now, was a district destructive of health. He never told his unfortunate wife the reason of her banishment to so dangerous a country. He did not deign to utter complaint or accusation. He lived with her alone, in cold silence, without answering her questions, or listening to her remonstrances. He patiently waited till the pestilential air should destroy the health of this young lady. In a few months she died. Some chronicles, indeed, tell us that Nello used the dagger to hasten her death. It is certain that he survived her, plunged in sadness and perpetual silence. Dante had, in this incident, all the materials of an ample and very poetical narrative. But he bestows on it only four verses. He meets in Purgatory three spirits. One was a captain who fell fighting on the same side with him in the battle of Campaldino; the second, a gentleman assassinated by the treachery of the House of Este; the third, was a woman unknown to the poet, and who, after the others had spoken, turned towards him with these words:—

'Recorditi di me; che son la Pia,
Sienna mi fe, disfecemi Maremma,
Salsi colui che inanellata pria
Disposando m' avea con la sua gemma.'"

Purgatorio, cant. 5.

—*Edinburgh Review*, No. lviii.]

" Mais elle était du monde, ou les plus belles choses,
Ont le pire destin ;
Et Rose elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses,
L'espace d'un Matin."

MALHERBE.

THERE are bright scenes beneath Italian skies,
Where glowing suns their purest light diffuse,
Uncultured flowers in wild profusion rise,
And nature lavishes her warmest hues ;
But trust thou not her smile, her balmy breath,
Away ! her charms are but the pomp of Death !

He, in the vine-clad bowers, unseen is dwelling,
Where the cool shade its freshness round thee throws,
His voice, in every perfumed zephyr swelling,
With gentlest whisper lures thee to repose ;
And the soft sounds that through the foliage sigh,
But woo thee still to slumber and to die,

Mysterious danger lurks, a syren, there,
Not robed in terrors, or announced in gloom,
But stealing o'er thee in the scented air,
And veil'd in flowers, that smile to deck thy tomb ;
How may we deem, amidst their deep array,
That heaven and earth but flatter to betray ?

Sunshine, and bloom, and verdure ! Can it be,
That these but charm us with destructive wiles ?
Where shall we turn, O Nature, if in *thee*
Danger is mask'd in beauty—death in smiles ?
Oh ! still the Circe of that fatal shore,
Where she, the sun's bright daughter, dwelt of yore !

There, year by year, that secret peril spreads,
Disguised in loveliness, its baleful reign,
And viewless blights o'er many a landscape sheds,
Gay with the riches of the south, in vain,
O'er fairy bowers and palaces of state,
Passing unseen, to leave them desolate.

And pillar'd halls, whose airy colonnades
Were formed to echo music's choral tone,
Are silent now, amidst deserted shades,*
Peopled by sculpture's graceful forms alone;
And fountains dash unheard, by lone alcoves,
Neglected temples, and forsaken groves.

And there, where marble nymphs, in beauty gleaming,
'Midst the deep shades of plane and cypress rise,
By wave or grot might Fancy linger, dreaming
Of old Arcadia's woodland deities,—
Wild visions!—there no sylvan powers convene,—
Death reigns the genius of the Elysian scene.

Ye, too, illustrious hills of Rome! that bear
Traces of mightier beings on your brow,
O'er you that subtle spirit of the air
Extends the desert of his empire now;
Broods o'er the wrecks of altar, fane, and dome,
And makes the Cæsars' ruin'd halls his home.

* See Madame de Staël's fine description, in her *Corinne*, of the Villa Borghese, deserted on account of malaria.

Youth, valour, beauty, oft have felt his power,
His crown'd and chosen victims: o'er their lot
Hath fond affection wept each blighted flower
In turn was loved and mourn'd, and is forgot.
But one who perish'd, left a tale of woe,
Meet for as deep a sigh as pity can bestow.

A voice of music, from Sienna's walls,
Is floating joyous on the summer air,
And there are banquets in her stately halls,
And graceful revels of the gay and fair,
And brilliant wreaths the altar have array'd,
Where meet her noblest youth, and loveliest maid.

To that young bride each grace hath Nature given,
Which glows on Art's divinest dream,—her eye
Hath a pure sunbeam of her native heaven—
Her cheek a tinge of morning's richest dye;
Fair as that daughter of the south, whose form
Still breathes and charms, in Vinci's colours warm.*

But is she blest?—for sometimes o'er her smile
A soft sweet shade of pensiveness is cast;
And in her liquid glance there seems a-while
To dwell some thought whose soul is with the past;
Yet soon it flies—a cloud that leaves no trace,
On the sky's azure, of its dwelling-place.

* An allusion to Leonardo da Vinci's picture of his wife Mona Lisa, supposed to be the most perfect imitation of Nature ever exhibited in painting.—See Vasari in his *Lives of the Painters.*

Perchance, at times, within her heart may rise
Remembrance of some early love or woe,
Faded, yet scarce forgotten—in her eyes
Wakening the half-form'd tear that may not flow;
Yet radiant seems her lot as aught on earth,
Where still some pining thought comes darkly o'er
our mirth.

The world before her smiles—its changeful gaze
She hath not proved as yet; her path seems gay
With flowers and sunshine, and the voice of praise
Is still the joyous herald of her way;
And beauty's light around her dwells, to throw
O'er every scene its own resplendent glow.

Such is the young Bianca—graced with all
That nature, fortune, youth, at once can give;
Pure in their loveliness—her looks recall
Such dreams, as ne'er life's early bloom survive;
And, when she speaks, each thrilling tone is fraught
With sweetness, born of high and heavenly thought.

And he, to whom are breathed her vows of faith
Is brave and noble—child of high descent,
He hath stood fearless in the ranks of death,
'Mid slaughter'd heaps, the warrior's monument:
And proudly marshall'd his Carroccio's* way,
Amidst the wildest wreck of war's array.

* See the description of this sort of consecrated war-chariot in Sismondi's *Histoire des Republiques Italiennes, &c.*, vol. i. p. 394.

And his the chivalrous, commanding mien,
Where high-born grandeur blends with courtly grace;
Yet may a lightning glance at times be seen,
Of fiery passions, darting o'er his face,
And fierce the spirit kindling in his eye—
But e'en while yet we gaze, its quick, wild flashes die.

And calmly can Pietra smile, concealing,
As if forgotten, vengeance, hate, remorse;
And veil the workings of each darker feeling,
Deep in his soul concentrating its force:
But yet, he loves—O! who hath loved, nor known
Affection's power exalt the bosom all its own?

The days roll on—and still Bianca's lot
Seems as a path of Eden—thou might'st deem
That grief, the mighty chastener, had forgot
To wake her soul from life's enchanted dream;
And, if her brow a moment's sadness wear,
It sheds but grace more intellectual there.

A few short years, and all is changed—her fate
Seems with some deep mysterious cloud o'ercast.
Have jealous doubts transform'd to wrath and hate,
The love whose glow expression's power surpass'd?
Lo! on Pietra's brow a sullen gloom
Is gathering day by day, prophetic of her doom.

O! can he meet that eye, of light serene,
Whence the pure spirit looks in radiance forth,

And view that bright intelligence of mien
Form'd to express but thoughts of loftiest worth,
Yet deem that vice within that heart can reign?
—How shall he e'er confide in aught on earth again?

In silence oft, with strange vindictive gaze,
Transient, yet fill'd with meaning, stern and wild,
Her features, calm in beauty, he surveys,
Then turns away, and fixes on her child
So dark a glance, as thrills a mother's mind
With some vague fear, scarce own'd, and undefined.

There stands a lonely dwelling, by the wave
Of the blue deep which bathes Italia's shore,
Far from all sounds, but rippling seas that lave
Grey rocks with foliage richly shadow'd o'er,
And sighing winds, that murmur through the wood,
Fringing the beach of that Hesperian flood.

Fair is that house of solitude—and fair
The green Maremma, far around it spread,
A sun-bright waste of beauty—yet an air
Of brooding sadness o'er the scene is shed,
No human footstep tracks the lone domain,
The desert of luxuriance glows in vain.

And silent are the marble halls that rise
'Mid founts, and cypress walks, and olive groves:
All sleeps in sunshine, 'neath cerulean skies,
And still around the sea-breeze lightly roves;
Yet every trace of man reveals alone,
That there life once hath flourish'd—and is gone.

There, till around them slowly, softly stealing,
The summer air, deceit in every sigh,
Came fraught with death, its power no sign revealing
Thy sires, Pietra, dwelt, in days gone by;
And strains of mirth and melody have flow'd
Where stands, all voiceless now, the still abode.

And thither doth her Lord, remorseless, bear
Bianca with her child—his alter'd eye
And brow a stern and fearful calmness wear,
While his dark spirit seals their doom—to die;
And the deep bodings of his victim's heart,
Tell her, from fruitless hope at once to part.

It is the summer's glorious prime—and blending
Its blue transparence with the skies, the deep,
Each tint of Heaven upon its breast descending,
Scarce murmurs as it heaves, in glassy sleep,
And on its wave reflects, more softly bright,
That lovely shore of solitude and light.

Fragrance in each warm southern gale is breathing,
Deck'd with young flowers the rich Maremma glows,
Neglected vines the trees are wildly wreathing,
And the fresh myrtle in exuberance blows,
And far around, a deep and sunny bloom
Mantles the scene, as garlands robe the tomb.

Yes! 'tis *thy* tomb. Bianca! fairest flower!
The voice that calls thee speaks in every gale,
Which o'er thee breathing with insidious power,
Bids the young roses of thy cheek turn pale,

And, fatal in its softness, day by day,
Steals from that eye some trembling spark away.

But sink not yet; for there are darker woes,
Daughter of Beauty! in thy spring-morn fading,
Sufferings more keen for thee reserved than those
Of lingering death, which thus thine eye are shading!
Nerve then thy heart to meet that bitter lot;
'Tis agony—but soon to be forgot!

What deeper pangs maternal hearts can wring,
Than hourly to behold the spoiler's breath
Shedding, as mildews on the bloom of spring,
O'er Infancy's fair cheek the blight of death?
To gaze and shrink, as gathering shades o'ercast
The pale smooth brow, yet watch it to the last!

Such pangs were thine, young mother!—Thou didst bend
O'er thy fair boy, and raise his drooping head;
And faint and hopeless, far from every friend,
Keep thy sad midnight-vigils near his bed,
And watch his patient, supplicating eye,
Fix'd upon thee—on thee!—who could'st no aid supply!

There was no voice to cheer thy lonely woe
Through those dark hours—to thee the wind's low sigh,
And the faint murmur of the ocean's flow,
Came like some spirit whispering—"He must die!"

And thou didst vainly clasp him to the breast
His young and sunny smile so oft with hope had blest.

'Tis past—that fearful trial—he is gone;
But thou, sad mourner! hast not long to weep;
The hour of nature's charter'd peace comes on,
And thou shalt share thine infant's holy sleep.
A few short sufferings yet—and death shall be
As a bright messenger from heaven to thee.

But ask not—hope not—one relenting thought
From him who doom'd thee thus to waste away,
Whose heart, with sullen, speechless vengeance fraught,
Broods in dark triumph o'er thy slow decay;
And coldly, sternly, silently can trace
The gradual withering of each youthful grace.

And yet the day of vain remorse shall come,
When thou, bright victim! on his dreams shalt rise
As an accusing angel—and thy tomb,
A martyr's shrine, be hallow'd in his eyes!
Then shall thine innocence his bosom wring,
More than thy fancied guilt with jealous pangs could sting.

Lift thy meek eyes to heaven—for all on earth,
Young sufferer! fades before thee—Thou art lone—
Hope, Fortune, Love, smiled brightly on thy birth,
Thine hour of death is all Affliction's own!
It is our task to suffer—and our fate
To learn that mighty lesson, soon or late.

The season's glory fades—the vintage-lay
Through joyous Italy resounds no more;
But mortal loveliness hath pass'd away,
Fairer than aught in summer's glowing store.
Beauty and youth are gone—behold them such
As Death hath made them with his blighting touch!

The summer's breath came o'er them—and they died!
Softly it came to give luxuriance birth,
Call'd forth young nature in her festal pride,
But bore to them their summons from the earth!
Again shall blow that mild, delicious breeze,
And wake to life and light all flowers—but these.

No sculptured urn, nor verse thy virtues telling,
O lost and loveliest one! adorns thy grave;
But o'er that humble cypress-shaded dwelling
The dew-drops glisten, and the wild-flowers wave—
Emblems more meet, in transient light and bloom,
For thee, who thus didst pass in brightness to the tomb!

STANZAS TO THE MEMORY OF GEORGE THE THIRD.

"Among many nations was there no King like him."—NEHEMIAH.
"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel!"—SAMUEL.

ANOTHER warning sound! the funeral bell,
Startling the cities of the isle once more
With measured tones of melancholy swell,
Strikes on th' awaken'd heart from shore to shore.
He, at whose coming monarchs sink to dust,
The chambers of our palaces hath trod,
And the long-suffering spirit of the just,
Pure from its ruins, hath return'd to God!
Yet may not England o'er her Father weep;
Thoughts to her bosom crowd, too many, and too deep.

Vain voice of Reason, hush!—they yet must flow,
The unrestrain'd, involuntary tears;
A thousand feelings sanctify the wo,
Roused by the glorious shades of vanish'd years.
Tell us no more 'tis not the time for grief,
Now that the exile of the soul is past,

And Death, blest messenger of Heaven's relief,
Hath borne the wanderer to his rest at last;
For him, eternity hath tenfold day,
We feel, we know, 'tis thus—yet nature will have way.

What though amidst us, like a blasted oak,
Sadd'ning the scene where once it nobly reign'd,
A dread memorial of the lightning stroke,
Stamp'd with its fiery record, he remain'd;
Around that shatter'd tree still fondly clung
Th' undying tendrils of our love, which drew
Fresh nurture from its deep decay, and sprung
Luxuriant thence, to Glory's ruin true;
While England hung her trophies on the stem,
That desolately stood, unconscious e'en of THEM.

Of *them* unconscious! Oh mysterious doom!
Who shall unfold the counsels of the skies?
His was the voice which roused, as from the tomb,
The realm's high soul to loftiest energies!
His was the spirit, o'er the isles which threw
The mantle of its fortitude; and wrought
In every bosom, powerful to renew
Each dying spark of pure and generous thought;
The star of tempests! beaming on the mast,*
The seaman's torch of Hope, 'midst perils deepening fast.

* The glittering meteor, like a star, which often appears about a ship during tempests; if seen upon the main-mast, is considered by the sailors as an omen of good weather.—See DAMPIER'S *Voyages*.

Then from th' unslumbering influence of his worth,
  Strength, as of inspiration, fill'd the land;
A young, but quenchless, flame went brightly forth,
  Kindled by him—who saw it not expand!
Such was the will of heaven—the gifted seer,
  Who with his God had communed, face to face,
And from the house of bondage, and of fear,
  In faith victorious, led the chosen race;
He through the desert and the waste their guide,
Saw dimly from afar, the promised land—and died.

O full of days and virtues! on thy head
  Centred the woes of many a bitter lot;
Fathers have sorrow'd o'er their beauteous dead,
  Eyes, quench'd in night, the sunbeam have forgot;
Minds have striven buoyantly with evil years,
  And sunk beneath their gathering weight at length;
But Pain for thee had fill'd a cup of tears,
  Where every anguish mingled all its strength;
By thy lost child we saw thee weeping stand,
And shadows deep around fell from th' Eternal's hand.

Then came the noon of glory, which thy dreams
  Perchance of yore had faintly prophesied;
But what to *thee* the splendour of its beams?
  The ice-rock glows not 'midst the summer's pride!
Nations leap'd up to joy—as streams that burst,
  At the warm touch of spring, their frozen chain,
And o'er the plains, whose verdure once they nursed.
  Roll in exulting melody again;

And bright o'er earth the long majestic line
Of England's triumphs swept, to rouse all hearts—
but thine.

Oh! what a dazzling vision, by the veil
That o'er thy spirit hung, was shut from thee,
When sceptred chieftains throng'd with palms to
hail
The crowning isle, th' anointed of the sea!
Within thy palaces the lords of earth
Met to rejoice—rich pageants glitter'd by,
And stately revels imaged, in their mirth,
The old magnificence of chivalry.
They reach'd not thee—amidst them, yet alone,
Stillness and gloom begirt one dim and shadowy
throne.

Yet there was mercy still—if joy no more
Within that blasted circle might intrude,
Earth had no grief whose footstep might pass o'er
The silent limits of its solitude!
If all unheard the bridal song awoke
Our hearts' full echoes, as it swell'd on high;
Alike unheard the sudden dirge, that broke
On the glad strain, with dread solemnity!
If the land's rose unheeded wore its bloom,
Alike unfelt the storm that swept it to the tomb.

And she, who, tried through all the stormy past,
Severely, deeply proved, in many an hour,
Watch'd o'er thee, firm and faithful to the last,
Sustain'd, inspired, by strong affection's power;

If to thy soul her voice no music bore—
If thy closed eye and wandering spirit caught
No light from looks, that fondly would explore
Thy mien, for traces of responsive thought;
Oh! thou wert spared the pang that would have thrill'd
Thine inmost heart, when death that anxious bosom still'd.

Thy loved ones fell around thee. Manhood's prime,
Youth, with its glory, in its fulness, age,
All, at the gates of their eternal clime
Lay down, and closed their mortal pilgrimage;
The land wore ashes for its perish'd flowers,
The grave's imperial harvest. Thou, meanwhile,
Didst walk unconscious through thy royal towers,
The one that wept not in the tearful isle!
As a tired warrior, on his battle-plain,
Breathes deep in dreams amidst the mourners and the slain.

And who can tell what visions might be thine?
The stream of thought, though broken, still was pure!
Still o'er that wave the stars of heaven might shine,
Where earthly image would no more endure!
Though many a step, of once-familiar sound,
Came as a stranger's o'er thy closing ear,
And voices breathed forgotten tones around,
Which that paternal heart once thrill'd to hear;
The mind hath senses of its own, and powers
To people boundless worlds, in its most wandering hours.

Nor might the phantoms to thy spirit known
Be dark or wild, creations of remorse;
Unstain'd by thee, the blameless past had thrown
No fearful shadows o'er the future's course:
For thee no cloud, from memory's dread abyss,
Might shape such forms as haunt the tyrant's eye;
And, closing up each avenue of bliss,
Murmur their summons, to "despair and die!"
No! e'en though joy depart, though reason cease,
Still virtue's ruin'd home is redolent of peace.

They might be with thee still—the loved, the tried,
The fair, the lost—they might be with thee still!
More softly seen, in radiance purified
From each dim vapour of terrestrial ill;
Long after earth received them, and the note
Of the last requiem o'er their dust was pour'd,
As passing sunbeams o'er thy soul might float
Those forms, from us withdrawn—to thee restored!
Spirits of holiness, in light reveal'd,
To commune with a mind whose source of tears was seal'd.

Came they with tidings from the worlds above,
Those viewless regions where the weary rest?
Sever'd from earth, estranged from mortal love,
Was thy mysterious converse with the blest?
Or shone their visionary presence bright
With human beauty?—did their smiles renew
Those days of sacred and serene delight,
When fairest beings in thy pathway grew?

Oh! Heaven hath balm for every wound it makes,
Healing the broken heart; it smites, but ne'er forsakes.

These may be fantasies—and this alone,
Of all we picture in our dreams, is sure;
That rest, made perfect, is at length thine own,
Rest, in thy God immortally secure!
Enough for tranquil faith; released from all
The woes that graved Heaven's lessons on thy brow,
No cloud to dim, no fetter to enthral,
Haply thine eye is on thy people now;
Whose love around thee still its offerings shed,
Though vainly sweet, as flowers, grief's tribute to the dead.

But if th' ascending, disembodied mind,
Borne, on the wings of morning, to the skies,
May cast one glance of tenderness behind
On scenes once hallow'd by its mortal ties,
How much hast thou to gaze on! all that lay
By the dark mantle of thy soul conceal'd,
The might, the majesty, the proud array
Of England's march o'er many a noble field,
All spread beneath thee, in a blaze of light,
Shine like some glorious land, view'd from an Alpine height.

Away, presumptuous thought!—departed saint!
To thy freed vision what can earth display
Of pomp, of royalty, that is not faint,
Seen from the birth-place of celestial day?

Oh! pale and weak the sun's reflected rays,
E'en in their fervour of meridian heat,
To him, who in the sanctuary may gaze
On the bright cloud that fills the mercy-seat!
And thou may'st view, from thy divine abode,
The dust of empires flit before a breath of God.

And yet we mourn thee! Yes! thy place is void
Within our hearts—there veil'd thine image dwelt,
But cherish'd still; and o'er that tie destroy'd,
Though faith rejoice, fond nature still must melt.
Beneath the long-loved sceptre of thy sway,
Thousands were born, who now in dust repose,
And many a head, with years and sorrows grey,
Wore youth's bright tresses, when thy star arose;
And many a glorious mind, since that fair dawn,
Hath fill'd our sphere with light, now to its source withdrawn.

Earthquakes have rock'd the nations:—things revered,
Th' ancestral fabrics of the world, went down
In ruins, from whose stones Ambition rear'd
His lonely pyramid of dread renown.
But when the fires that long had slumber'd, pent
Deep in men's bosoms, with volcanic force,
Bursting their prison-house, each bulwark rent,
And swept each holy barrier from their course,
Firm and unmoved, amidst that lava-flood,
Still, by thine arm upheld, our ancient landmarks stood.

Be they eternal!—Be thy children found
  Still to their country's altars true like thee!
And, while "the name of Briton" is a sound
  Of rallying music to the brave and free,
With the high feelings, at the word which swell,
  To make the breast a shrine for Freedom's flame,
Be mingled thoughts of him, who loved so well,
  Who left so pure, its heritage of fame!
Let earth with trophies guard the conqueror's dust,
Heaven in our souls embalms the memory of the just.

All else shall pass away—the thrones of kings,
  The very traces of their *tombs* depart;
But number not with perishable things
  The holy records Virtue leaves the heart,
Heir-looms from race to race!—and oh! in days,
  When, by the yet unborn, thy deeds are blest,
When our sons learn, "as household words," thy praise,
  Still on thine offspring, may thy spirit rest!
And many a name of that imperial line,
Father and patriot! blend, in England's songs, with thine!

CRITICAL ANNOTATION.

"THE last poem is to the memory of his late Majesty: unlike courtly themes in general, this is one of the deepest and most lasting interest. Buried as the King had long been in mental and visual darkness, and dead to the common joys of the world, his death, perhaps, did not occasion the shock, or the piercing sorrow which we have felt on some other public losses; but the heart must be cold indeed, that could, on reflection, regard the whole fortune and fate of that venerable, gallant, tender-hearted, and pious man, without a more than common sympathy. There was something in his character so truly national; his very errors were of so amiable a kind, his excellencies bore so high a stamp, his nature was so genuine and unsophisticated, he stood in his splendid court, amidst his large and fine family, so true a husband, so good a father, so safe an example; he so thoroughly understood the feelings, and so duly appreciated the virtues, even the uncourtly virtues of his subjects; and, with all this, the sorrows from heaven rained down upon his head in so 'pitiless and pelting a storm,'—all these—his high qualities and unparalleled sufferings, form such a subject for poetry, as nothing, we should imagine, but its difficulty and the expectation attending it, would prevent from being seized upon by the greatest poets of the day. We will not say that Mrs Hemans has filled the whole canvass as it might have been filled, but unquestionably her poem is beyond all comparison with any which we have seen on the subject; it is full of fine and pathetic passages, and it leads us up through all the dismal colourings of the foreground to that bright and consoling prospect which should close every Christian's reflections on such a matter. An analysis of so short a poem is wholly

unnecessary, and we have already transgressed our limits; we will, therefore, give but one extract of that soothing nature alluded to, and release our readers:—

'Yet was there mercy still—if joy no more,' &c.

"It is time to close this article.* Our readers will have seen, and we do not deny, that we have been much interested by our subject: who or what Mrs Hemans is we know not: we have been told that, like a poet of antiquity:

—'Tristia vitæ
Solatur cantu,'—

If it be so (and the most sensible hearts are not uncommonly nor unnaturally the most bitterly wounded), she seems, from the tenor of her writings, to bear about her a higher and a surer balsam than the praises of men, or even the 'sacred muse' herself can impart. Still there is a pleasure, an innocent and an honest pleasure, even to a wounded spirit, in fame fairly earned; and such fame as may wait upon our decision, we freely and conscientiously bestow;—in our opinion, all her poems are elegant and pure in thought and language; her later poems are of higher promise, they are vigorous, picturesque, and pathetic."

Quarterly Review, vol. xxiv.

* This critique, from the pen of the venerable and distinguished Editor, William Gifford, Esq., comprehended strictures on "The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy,"—"Tales and Historic Scenes in Verse,"—"Translations from Camoens," &c.,—"The Sceptic," and "Stanzas to the Memory of the late King."

A TALE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

A FRAGMENT.

THE moonbeam, quivering o'er the wave,
Sleeps in pale gold on wood and hill,
The wild wind slumbers in its cave,
And heaven is cloudless—earth is still!
The pile, that crowns yon savage height
With battlements of Gothic might,
Rises in softer pomp array'd,
Its massy towers half lost in shade,
Half touch'd with mellowing light!
The rays of night, the tints of time,
Soft-mingling on its dark-grey stone,
O'er its rude strength and mien sublime,
A placid smile have thrown;
And far beyond, where wild and high,
Bounding the pale blue summer sky,
A mountain-vista meets the eye,
Its dark, luxuriant woods assume
A pencil'd shade, a softer gloom;
Its jutting cliffs have caught the light,
Its torrents glitter through the night,
While every cave and deep recess
Frowns in more shadowy awfulness.

Scarce moving on the glassy deep
Yon gallant vessel seems to sleep,
  But darting from its side,
How swiftly does its boat design
A slender, silvery, waving line
  Of radiance o'er the tide!
No sound is on the summer seas,
  But the low dashing of the oar,
And faintly sighs the midnight breeze
  Through woods that fringe the rocky shore.
—That boat has reach'd the silent bay,
The dashing oar has ceased to play,
The breeze has murmur'd and has died
In forest-shades, on ocean's tide.
No step, no tone, no breath of sound
Disturbs the loneliness profound;
And midnight spreads o'er earth and main
  A calm so holy and so deep,
That voice of mortal were profane,
  To break on nature's sleep!
It is the hour for thought to soar,
  High o'er the cloud of earthly woes;
For rapt devotion to adore,
  For passion to repose;
And virtue to forget her tears,
In visions of sublimer spheres!
For oh! those transient gleams of heaven,
To calmer, purer spirits given,
Children of hallow'd peace, are known
In solitude and shade alone!
Like flowers that shun the blaze of noon,
To blow beneath the midnight moon,

The garish world they will not bless,
But only live in loneliness!

Hark! did some note of plaintive swell
  Melt on the stillness of the air?
Or was it fancy's powerful spell
  That woke such sweetness there?
For wild and distant it arose,
Like sounds that bless the bard's repose,
When in lone wood, or mossy cave
He dreams beside some fountain-wave,
And fairy worlds delight the eyes
Wearied with life's realities.
—Was it illusion?—yet again
Rises and falls th' enchanted strain
  Mellow, and sweet, and faint,
As if some spirit's touch had given
The soul of sound to harp of heaven
  To soothe a dying saint!
Is it the mermaid's distant shell,
  Warbling beneath the moonlit wave?
—Such witching tones might lure full well
  The seaman to his grave!
Sure from no mortal touch ye rise,
Wild, soft, aerial melodies!
—Is it the song of woodland-fay
  From sparry grot, or haunted bower?
Hark! floating on, the magic lay
  Draws near yon ivied tower!
Now nearer still, the listening ear
May catch sweet harp notes, faint, yet clear;
And accents low, as if in fear,

Thus murmur, half suppress'd :—
" Awake ! the moon is bright on high,
The sea is calm, the bark is nigh,
The world is hush'd to rest !"
Then sinks the voice—the strain is o'er,
Its last low cadence dies along the shore.

Fair Bertha hears th' expected song,
Swift from her tower she glides along ;
No echo to her tread awakes,
Her fairy step no slumber breaks,
And, in that hour of silence deep,
While all around the dews of sleep
O'erpower each sense, each eyelid steep,
Quick throbs her heart with hope and fear.
Her dark eye glistens with a tear.
Half-wavering now, the varying cheek
And sudden pause, her doubts bespeak,
The lip now flush'd, now pale as death,
The trembling frame, the fluttering breath !
Oh ! in that moment, o'er her soul,
What struggling passions claim control !
Fear, duty, love, in conflict high,
By turns have won th' ascendency ;
And as, all tremulously bright,
Streams o'er her face the beam of night,
What thousand mix'd emotions play
O'er that fair face, and melt away:
Like forms whose quick succession gleams
O'er fancy's rainbow-tinted dreams ;
Like the swift glancing lights that rise
'Midst the wild cloud of stormy skies,

And traverse ocean o'er;
So in that full, impassion'd eye
The changeful meanings rise and die,
Just seen—and then no more!
But oh! too short that pause—again
Thrills to her heart that witching strain:—
"Awake! the midnight moon is bright,
Awake! the moments wing their flight,
Haste! or they speed in vain!"

O, call of love! thy potent spell,
O'er that weak heart prevails too well;
The "still small voice" is heard no more
That pleaded duty's cause before,
And fear is hush'd, and doubt is gone,
And pride forgot, and reason flown!
Her cheek, whose colour came and fled,
Resumes its warmest, brightest red,
Her step its quick elastic tread,
Her eye its beaming smile!
Through lonely court and silent hall,
Flits her light shadow o'er the wall,
And still that low, harmonious call
Melts on her ear the while!
Though love's quick ear alone could tell
The words its accents faintly swell:—
"Awake, while yet the lingering night
And stars and seas befriend our flight,
O! haste, while all is well!"

The halls, the courts, the gates, are past,
She gains the moonlit beach at last.

Who waits to guide her trembling feet?
Who flies the fugitive to greet?
He, to her youthful heart endear'd
By all it e'er had hoped and feared,
Twined with each wish, with every thought,
Each day-dream fancy e'er had wrought,
Whose tints portray, with flattering skill,
What brighter worlds alone fulfil!
—Alas! that aught so fair should fly,
Thy blighting wand, Reality!

A chieftain's mien her Osbert bore,
A pilgrim's lowly robes he wore,
Disguise that vainly strove to hide
Bearing and glance of martial pride;
For he in many a battle scene,
On many a rampart-breach had been;
Had sternly smiled at danger nigh,
Had seen the valiant bleed and die,
And proudly rear'd on hostile tower,
'Midst falchion-clash, and arrowy shower,
Britannia's banner high!
And though some ancient feud had taught
His Bertha's sire to loathe his name,
More noble warrior never fought,
For glory's prize, or England's fame.
And well his dark, commanding eye,
And form and step of stately grace,
Accorded with achievements high,
Soul of emprize and chivalry,
Bright name, and generous race!

His cheek, embrown'd by many a sun,
Tells a proud tale of glory won,
Of vigil, march, and combat rude,
Valour, and toil, and fortitude!
E'en while youth's earliest blushes threw
Warm o'er that cheek, their vivid hue,
His gallant soul, his stripling-form,
Had braved the battle's rudest storm;
When England's conquering archers stood,
And dyed thy plain, Poitiers, with blood,
When shiver'd axe, and cloven shield,
And shatter'd helmet, strew'd the field,
And France around her King in vain,
Had marshal'd valour's noblest train;
In that dread strife, his lightning eye,
Had flash'd with transport keen and high,
And 'midst the battle's wildest tide,
Throbb'd his young heart with hope and pride.
Alike that fearless heart could brave,
Death on the war-field or the wave;
Alike in tournament or fight,
That ardent spirit found delight!
Yet oft, 'midst hostile scenes afar,
Bright o'er his soul a vision came,
Rising, like some benignant star,
On stormy seas, or plains of war,
To soothe, with hopes more dear than fame,
The heart that throbb'd to Bertha's name!
And 'midst the wildest rage of fight,
And in the deepest calm of night,
To her his thoughts would wing their flight,
With fond devotion warm;

Oft would those glowing thoughts portray
Some home, from tumults far away,
  Graced with that angel form!
And now his spirit fondly deems
Fulfill'd its loveliest, dearest dreams!

Who, with pale cheek, and locks of snow,
  In minstrel garb, attends the chief?
The moonbeam on his thoughtful brow
  Reveals a shade of grief.
Sorrow and time have touch'd his face,
With mournful yet majestic grace,
Soft as the melancholy smile
Of sunset on some ruin'd pile!
—It is the bard, whose song had power,
To lure the maiden from her tower;
The bard whose wild, inspiring lays,
E'en in gay childhood's earliest days,
  First woke, in Osbert's kindling breast.
  The flame that will not be represt,
The pulse that throbs for praise!
Those lays had banish'd from his eye,
The bright, soft tears of infancy,
Had soothed the boy to calm repose,
Had hush'd his bosom's earliest woes;
And when the light of thought awoke,
When first young reason's day-spring broke,
More powerful still, they bade arise
His spirit's burning energies!
Then the bright dream of glory warm'd,
Then the loud pealing war-song charm'd,
The legends of each martial line,
The battle-tales of Palestine:

And oft, since then, *his* deeds had proved,
Themes of the lofty lays he loved!
Now, at triumphant love's command,
Since Osbert leaves his native land,
Forsaking glory's high career,
For her, than glory far more dear;
Since hope's gay dream, and meteor ray,
To distant regions points his way,
That there Affection's hands may dress,
A fairy bower for happiness;
That fond, devoted bard, though now
Time's wint'ry garland wreathes his brow.
Though quench'd the sunbeam of his eye,
And fled his spirit's buoyancy;
And strength and enterprise are past,
Still follows constant to the last!

Though his sole wish was but to die
Midst the calm scenes of days gone by;
And all that hallows and endears
The memory of departed years—
Sorrow, and joy, and time, have twined
To those loved scenes, his pensive mind;
Ah! what can tear the links apart,
That bind his chieftain to his heart?
What smile but *his* with joy can light
The eye obscured by age's night?
Last of a loved and honour'd line,
Last tie to earth in life's decline,
Till death its lingering spark shall dim,
That faithful eye must gaze on him!

Silent and swift, with footstep light,
Haste on those fugitives of night,
They reach the boat—the rapid oar
Soon wafts them from the wooded shore
The bark is gain'd—a gallant few,
Vassals of Osbert, form its crew;
The pennant, in the moonlight beam,
With soft suffusion glows;
From the white sail a silvery gleam,
Falls on the wave's repose;
Long shadows undulating play,
From mast and streamer, o'er the bay;
But still so hush'd the summer-air,
They tremble, 'midst that scene so fair,
Lest morn's first beam behold them there
—Wake, viewless wanderer! breeze of night,
From river-wave, or mountain-height,
Or dew-bright couch of moss and flowers,
By haunted spring, in forest bowers;
Or dost thou lurk in pearly cell,
In amber grot, where mermaids dwell,
And cavern'd gems their lustre throw,
O'er the red sea-flowers' vivid glow?
Where treasures, not for mortal gaze,
In solitary splendour blaze;
And sounds, ne'er heard by mortal ear,
Swell through the deep's unfathom'd sphere?
What grove of that mysterious world,
Holds thy light wing in slumber furl'd?
Awake! o'er glittering seas to rove,
Awake! to guide the bark of love!

Swift fly the midnight hours, and soon
Shall fade the bright propitious moon;
Soon shall the waning stars grow pale,
E'en now—but lo! the rustling sail
Swells to the new-sprung ocean gale!
The bark glides on—their fears are o'er,
Recedes the bold romantic shore,
  Its features mingling fast;
Gaze, Bertha, gaze, thy lingering eye
May still each lovely scene descry
  Of years for ever past!
There wave the woods, beneath whose shade,
With bounding step, thy childhood play'd;
'Midst ferny glades, and mossy lawns,
Free as their native birds and fawns;
Listening the sylvan sounds, that float
On each low breeze, 'midst dells remote;
The ringdove's deep, melodious moan,
The rustling deer in thickets lone;
The wild-bee's hum, the aspen's sigh,
The wood-stream's plaintive harmony.
Dear scenes of many a sportive hour,
There thy own mountains darkly tower!
'Midst their grey rocks no glen so rude,
But thou hast loved its solitude!
No path so wild but thou hast known,
And traced its rugged course alone!
The earliest wreath that bound thy hair,
Was twined of glowing heath-flowers there.
There, in the day-spring of thy years,
Undimm'd by passions or by tears,
Oft, while thy bright, enraptured eye

Wandered o'er ocean, earth, or sky,
While the wild breeze that round thee blew,
Tinged thy warm cheek with richer hue;
Pure as the skies that o'er thy head
Their clear and cloudless azure spread;
Pure as that gale, whose light wing drew
Its freshness from the mountain dew;
Glow'd thy young heart with feelings high,
A heaven of hallow'd ecstasy!
Such days were thine! 'ere love had drawn
A cloud o'er that celestial dawn!
As the clear dews in morning's beam,
With soft reflected colouring stream,
Catch every tint of eastern gem,
To form the rose's diadem;
But vanish when the noontide hour
Glows fiercely on the shrinking flower;
Thus in thy soul each calm delight,
Like morn's first dew-drops, pure and bright,
Fled swift from passion's blighting fire,
Or linger'd only to expire!

Spring, on thy native hills again,
Shall bid neglected wild-flowers rise,
And call forth, in each grassy glen,
Her brightest emerald dyes!
There shall the lonely mountain-rose,
Wreath of the cliffs, again disclose;
'Midst rocky dells, each well-known stream,
Shall sparkle in the summer beam;
The birch, o'er precipice and cave,
Its feathery foliage still shall wave;

The ash 'midst rugged clefts unveil
Its coral clusters to the gale,
And autumn shed a warmer bloom,
O'er the rich heath and glowing broom.
But thy light footstep there no more,
Each path, each dingle shall explore;
In vain may smile each green recess,
—Who now shall pierce its loneliness?
The stream through shadowy glens may stray,
—Who now shall trace its glistening way?
In solitude, in silence deep,
Shrined 'midst her rocks, shall echo sleep,
No lute's wild swell again shall rise,
To wake her mystic melodies.
All soft may blow the mountain air,
—It will not wave thy graceful hair!
The mountain-rose may bloom and die,
—It will not meet thy smiling eye!
But like those scenes of vanish'd days,
Shall others ne'er delight;
Far lovelier lands shall meet thy gaze,
Yet seem not half so bright!
O'er the dim woodlands' fading hue,
Still gleams yon Gothic pile on high;
Gaze on, while yet 'tis thine to view
That home of infancy!
Heed not the night-dew's chilling power,
Heed not the sea-wind's coldest hour,
But pause, and linger on the deck,
Till of those towers no trace, no speck,
Is gleaming o'er the main;
For when the mist of morn shall rise,

Blending the sea, the shore, the skies,
That home, once vanish'd from thine eyes,
Shall bless them ne'er again!
There the dark tales and songs of yore,
First with strange transport thrill'd thy soul,
E'en while their fearful, mystic lore,
From thy warm cheek the life-bloom stole;
There, while thy father's raptured ear,
Dwelt fondly on a strain so dear,
And in his eye the trembling tear,
Reveal'd his spirit's trance;
How oft, those echoing halls along,
Thy thrilling voice has swell'd the song,
Tradition wild of other days,
Or troubadour's heroic lays,
Or legend of romance!
Oh! many an hour has there been thine,
That memory's pencil oft shall dress
In softer shades, and tints that shine
In mellow'd loveliness!
While thy sick heart, and fruitless tears,
Shall mourn, with fond and deep regret,
The sunshine of thine early years,
Scarce deem'd so radiant—till it set!
The cloudless peace, unprized till gone,
The bliss, till vanish'd, hardly known!

On rock and turret, wood and hill,
The fading moonbeams linger still;
Still, Bertha, gaze on yon grey tower,
At evening's last and sweetest hour,
While varying still, the western skies

Flush'd the clear seas with rainbow-dyes,
Whose warm suffusions glow'd and pass'd,
Each richer, lovelier, than the last;
How oft, while gazing on the deep,
That seem'd a heaven of peace to sleep,
As if its wave, so still, so fair,
More frowning mien might never wear,
The twilight calm of mental rest,
Would steal in silence o'er thy breast,
And wake that dear and balmy sigh,
That softly breathes the spirit's harmony!
—Ah! ne'er again shall hours to thee be given,
Of joy on earth—so near allied to Heaven!

Why starts the tear to Bertha's eye?
Is not her long-loved Osbert nigh?
Is there a grief his voice, his smile,
His words, are fruitless to beguile?
—Oh! bitter to the youthful heart,
That scarce a pang, a care has known,
The hour when first from scenes we part,
Where life's bright spring has flown!
Forsaking, o'er the world to roam,
That little shrine of peace—our home!
E'en if delighted fancy throw
O'er that cold world, her brightest glow,
Painting its untried paths with flowers,
That will not live in earthly bowers;
(Too frail, too exquisite, to bear
One breath of life's ungenial air;)
E'en if such dreams of hope arise,
As Heaven alone can realize;

Cold were the breast that would not heave
One sigh, the home of youth to leave;
Stern were the heart that would not swell
To breathe life's saddest word—farewell!
Though earth has many a deeper woe,
Though tears, more bitter far, must flow,
That hour, whate'er our future lot,
That first fond grief, is ne'er forgot!

Such was the pang of Bertha's heart,
The thought, that bade the tear-drop start;
And Osbert by her side
Heard the deep sigh, whose bursting swell
Nature's fond struggle told too well;
And days of future bliss portray'd,
And love's own eloquence essay'd,
To soothe his plighted bride!
Of bright Arcadian scenes he tells,
In that sweet land to which they fly;
The vine-clad rocks, the fragrant dells
Of blooming Italy.
For he had roved a pilgrim there,
And gazed on many a spot so fair,
It seem'd like some enchanted grove,
Where only peace, and joy, and love,
Those exiles of the world, might rove,
And breathe its heavenly air;
And, all unmix'd with ruder tone,
Their "wood-notes wild" be heard alone!

Far from the frown of stern control,
That vainly would subdue the soul,

There shall their long-affianced hands,
Be join'd in consecrated bands,
And in some rich, romantic vale,
  Circled with heights of Alpine snow,
Where citron-woods enrich the gale,
And scented shrubs their balm exhale,
  And flowering myrtles blow;
And 'midst the mulberry boughs on high,
Weaves the wild vine her tapestry:
On some bright streamlet's emerald side,
Where cedars wave, in graceful pride,
Bosom'd in groves, their home shall rise,
A shelter'd bower of Paradise!

Thus would the lover soothe to rest
With tales of hope her anxious breast;
Nor vain that dear enchanting lore,
Her soul's bright visions to restore,
And bid gay phantoms of delight
Float, in soft colouring, o'er her sight.
—Oh! youth, sweet May-morn, fled so soon,
Far brighter than life's loveliest noon,
How oft thy spirit's buoyant power
Will triumph, e'en in sorrow's hour
  Prevailing o'er regret!
As rears its head th' elastic flower
Though the dark tempest's recent shower
Hang on its petals yet!

  Ah! not so soon can hope's gay smile
The aged bard to joy beguile:

Those silent years that steal away
The cheek's warm rose, the eye's bright ray,
Win from the mind a nobler prize,
E'en all its buoyant energies!
For him the April days are past,
  When grief was but a fleeting cloud;
No transient shade will sorrow cast,
  When age the spirit's might has bow'd!
And, as he sees the land grow dim,
That native land, now lost to him,
Fix'd are his eyes, and clasp'd his hands,
And long in speechless grief he stands.
  So desolately calm his air,
He seems an image, wrought to bear
The stamp of deep, though hush'd despair;
Motion and life no sign bespeaks
Save that the night-breeze, o'er his cheeks,
  Just waves his silvery hair!
Nought else could teach the eye to know
He was no sculptured form of woe!

Long gazing o'er the dark'ning flood,
Pale in that silent grief he stood;
Till the cold moon was waning fast,
  And many a lovely star had died,
And the grey heavens deep shadows cast
  Far o'er the slumbering tide;
And robed in one dark solemn hue,
Arose the distant shore to view.
Then, starting from his trance of woe,
Tears, long suppress'd, in freedom flow,

While thus his wild and plaintive strain,
Blends with the murmur of the main.

THE BARD'S FAREWELL.

Thou setting moon! when next thy rays
  Are trembling on the shadowy deep,
The land, now fading from my gaze,
  These eyes in vain shall weep;
And wander o'er the lonely sea,
And fix their tearful glance on thee,
On thee! whose light so softly gleams,
Through the green oaks that fringe my native streams.

But, 'midst those ancient groves, no more
  Shall I thy quivering lustre hail,
Its plaintive strain my harp must pour,
  To swell a foreign gale;
The rocks, the woods, whose echoes woke,
When its full tones their stillness broke,
  Deserted now, shall hear alone,
The brook's wild voice, the wind's mysterious moan.

And oh! ye fair, forsaken halls,
  Left by your lord to slow decay,
Soon shall the trophies on your walls
  Be mouldering fast away!
There shall no choral songs resound,
There shall no festal board be crown'd;
  But ivy wreath the silent gate,
And all be hush'd, and cold, and desolate.

No banner from the stately tower,
Shall spread its blazon'd folds on high,
There the wild brier and summer flower,
Unmark'd, shall wave and die.
Home of the mighty! thou art lone,
The noonday of thy pride is gone,
And, 'midst thy solitude profound,
A step shall echo like unearthly sound!

From thy cold hearths no festal blaze
Shall fill the hall with ruddy light,
Nor welcome, with convivial rays,
Some pilgrim of the night;
But there shall grass luxuriant spread,
As o'er the dwellings of the dead;
And the deep swell of every blast,
Seem a wild dirge for years of grandeur past.

And I—my joy of life is fled,
My spirit's power, my bosom's glow,
The raven locks that graced my head,
Wave in a wreath of snow!
And where the star of youth arose,
I deem'd life's lingering ray should close,
And those loved trees my tomb o'ershade,
Beneath whose arching bowers my childhood play'd.

Vain dream! that tomb in distant earth
Shall rise, forsaken and forgot;
And thou, sweet land, that gav'st me birth,
A grave must yield me not!

Yet, haply he for whom I leave
Thy shores, in life's dark winter-eve,
When cold the hand, and closed the lays,
And mute the voice he loved to praise,
O'er the hush'd harp one tear may shed,
And one frail garland o'er the minstrel's bed!

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.

'Twas night in Babylon: yet many a beam,
Of lamps far glittering from her domes on high,
Shone, brightly mingling in Euphrates' stream
With the clear stars of that Chaldean sky,
Whose azure knows no cloud: each whisper'd sigh
Of the soft night-breeze through her terrace bowers,
Bore deepening tones of joy and melody,
O'er an illumined wilderness of flowers;
And the glad city's voice went up from all her towers.

But prouder mirth was in the kingly hall,
Where, 'midst adoring slaves, a gorgeous band,
High at the stately midnight festival,
Belshazzar sat enthroned. There luxury's hand
Had shower'd around all treasures that expand
Beneath the burning East; all gems that pour
The sunbeams back; all sweets of many a land,
Whose gales waft incense from their spicy shore;
—But mortal pride look'd on, and still demanded more.

With richer zest the banquet may be fraught,
A loftier theme may swell the exulting strain!
The lord of nations spoke,—and forth were brought
The spoils of Salem's devastated fane.
Thrice holy vessels!—pure from earthly stain,
And set apart, and sanctified to Him,
Who deign'd within the oracle to reign,
Reveal'd, yet shadow'd; making noonday dim,
To that most glorious cloud between the cherubim.

They came, and louder peal'd the voice of song,
And pride flash'd brighter from the kindling eye,
And He who sleeps not heard the elated throng,
In mirth that plays with thunderbolts, defy
The Rock of Zion!—Fill the nectar high,
High in the cups of consecrated gold!
And crown the bowl with garlands, ere they die,
And bid the censers of the temple hold
Offerings to Babel's gods, the mighty ones of old!

Peace!—is it but a phantom of the brain,
Thus shadow'd forth, the senses to appal,
Yon fearful vision?—Who shall gaze again
To search its cause?—Along the illumined wall,
Startling, yet riveting the eyes of all.
Darkly it moves,—a hand, a human hand,
O'er the bright lamps of that resplendent hall,
In silence tracing, as a mystic wand,
Words all unknown, the tongue of some far distant land!

There are pale cheeks around the regal board,
And quivering limbs, and whispers deep and low,
And fitful starts!—the wine, in triumph pour'd,
Untasted foams, the song hath ceased to flow,
The waving censer drops to earth—and lo!
The king of men, the ruler, girt with mirth,
Trembles before a shadow!—Say not so!
—The child of dust, with guilt's foreboding sight,
Shrinks from the dread Unknown, the avenging
Infinite!

"But haste ye!—bring Chaldea's gifted seers,
The men of prescience!—haply to *their* eyes,
Which track the future through the rolling spheres,
Yon mystic sign may speak in prophecies."
They come—the readers of the midnight skies,
They that gave voice to visions—but in vain!
Still wrapt in clouds the awful secret lies,
It hath no language 'midst the starry train,
Earth has no gifted tongue Heaven's mysteries to
explain.

Then stood forth one, a child of other sires,
And other inspiration!—one of those
Who on the willows hung their captive lyres,
And sat, and wept, where Babel's river flows.
His eye was bright, and yet the pale repose
Of his pure features half o'eraw'd the mind,
Telling of inward mysteries—joys and woes
In lone recesses of the soul enshrined;
Depths of a being seal'd and sever'd from mankind.

Yes!—what was earth to him, whose spirit pass'd
Time's utmost bounds?—on whose unshrinking sight
Ten thousand shapes of burning glory cast
Their full resplendence?—Majesty and might
Were in his dreams;—for him the veil of light
Shrouding Heaven's inmost sanctuary and throne,
The curtain of th' unutterably bright
Was raised!—to him, in fearful splendour shown,
Ancient of Days! e'en Thou mad'st thy dread presence known.

He spoke:—the shadows of the things to come
Pass'd o'er his soul:—"O King, elate in pride!
God hath sent forth the writing of thy doom—
The one, the living, God by thee defied!
He, in whose balance earthly lords are tried,
Hath weigh'd, and found thee wanting. 'Tis decreed
The conqueror's hands thy kingdom shall divide,
The stranger to thy throne of power succeed!
Thy days are full—they come,—the Persian and the Mede!"

There fell a moment's thrilling silence round—
A breathless pause!—the hush of hearts that beat,
And limbs that quiver:—Is there not a sound,
A gathering cry, a tread of hurrying feet?
—'Twas but some echo in the crowded street,
Of far-heard revelry; the shout, the song,
The measured dance to music wildly sweet,
That speeds the stars their joyous course along—
Away; nor let a dream disturb the festal throng!

Peace yet again! Hark! steps in tumult flying,
Steeds rushing on, as o'er a battle-field!
The shouts of hosts exulting or defying,
The press of multitudes that strive or yield!
And the loud startling clash of spear and shield,
Sudden as earthquake's burst; and, blent with these,
The last wild shriek of those whose doom is seal'd
In their full mirth;—all deepening on the breeze,
As the long stormy roll of far-advancing seas!

And nearer yet the trumpet's blast is swelling,
Loud, shrill, and savage, drowning every cry;
And, lo! the spoiler in the regal dwelling,
Death—bursting on the halls of revelry!
Ere on their brows one fragile rose-leaf die,
The sword hath raged through joy's devoted train;
Ere one bright star be faded from the sky,
Red flames, like banners, wave from dome and fane;
Empire is lost and won—Belshazzar with the slain.*

* As originally written, the following additional stanzas (afterwards omitted) concluded this poem:—

Fallen is the golden city!—in the dust,
Spoil'd of her crown, dismantled of her state,
She that hath made the strength of towers her trust,
Weeps by her dead, supremely desolate!
She that beheld the nations at her gate,
Thronging in homage, shall be call'd no more
Lady of kingdoms! Who shall mourn her fate?
Her guilt is full, her march of triumph o'er—
What widow'd land shall now *her* widowhood deplore?

Sit thou in silence! Thou that wert enthroned
On many waters!—thou, whose augurs read
The language of the planets, and disown'd
The Mighty Name it blazons!—veil thy head,

Daughter of Babylon!—the sword is red
From thy destroyer's harvest, and the yoke
Is on thee, O most proud!—for thou hast said,
"I am, and none beside!" Th' Eternal spoke:
Thy glory was a spoil, thine idol-gods were broke!

But go thou forth, O Israel!—wake! rejoice!
Be clothed with strength, as in thine ancient day!
Renew the sound of harps, th' exulting voice,
The mirth of timbrels!—loose the chain, and say
God hath redeem'd his people!—from decay
The silent and the trampled shall arise!
—Awake!—put on thy beautiful array,
O long-forsaken Zion!—to the skies
Send up on every wind thy choral melodies!

And lift thy head!—Behold thy sons returning,
Redeem'd from exile, ransom'd from the chain,
Light hath revisited the house of mourning;
She that on Judah's mountains wept in vain,
Because her children were not—dwells again,
Girt with the lovely!—through thy streets, once more,
City of God! shall pass the bridal train,
And the bright lamps their festive radiance pour,
And the triumphal hymns thy joy of youth restore!

THE LAST CONSTANTINE.

. . . . . "Thou strivest nobly,
When hearts of sterner stuff perhaps had sunk;
And o'er thy fall, if it be so decreed,
Good men will mourn, and brave men will shed tears.
. . . . . .
. . . . . Fame I look not for,
But to sustain, in Heaven's all-seeing eye,
Before my fellow men, in mine own sight,
With graceful virtue and becoming pride,
The dignity and honour of a man,
Thus station'd as I am, I will do all
That man may do."

Miss BAILLIE's *Constantine Palæologus.*

I.

THE fires grew pale on Rome's deserted shrines,
In the dim grot the Pythia's voice had died;
—Shout, for the City of the Constantines,
The rising city of the billow-side,
The City of the Cross!—great ocean's bride,
Crown'd with her birth she sprung!—Long ages past,
And still she look'd in glory o'er the tide,
Which at her feet barbaric riches cast,
Pour'd by the burning East, all joyously and fast.

II.

Long ages past!—they left her porphyry halls
Still trod by kingly footsteps. Gems and gold
Broider'd her mantle, and her castled walls
Frown'd in their strength; yet there were signs which told
The days were full. The pure high faith of old
Was changed; and on her silken couch of sleep
She lay, and murmur'd if a rose-leaf's fold
Disturb'd her dreams; and call'd her slaves to keep
Their watch, that no rude sound might reach her o'er the deep.

III.

But there are sounds that from the regal dwelling
Free hearts and fearless only may exclude;
'Tis not alone the wind, at midnight swelling,
Breaks on the soft repose by luxury woo'd!
There are unbidden footsteps, which intrude
Where the lamps glitter, and the wine-cup flows,
And darker hues have stain'd the marble, strew'd
With the fresh myrtle, and the short-lived rose,
And Parian walls have rung to the dread march of foes.

IV.

A voice of multitudes is on the breeze,
Remote, yet solemn as the night-storm's roar
Through Ida's giant-pines! Across the seas
A murmur comes, like that the deep winds bore
From Tempé's haunted river to the shore

Of the reed-crown'd Eurotas; when, of old,
Dark Asia sent her battle-myriads o'er
Th' indignant wave, which would not be controll'd,
But past the Persian's chain in boundless freedom roll'd.

V.

And it is thus again?—Swift oars are dashing
The parted waters, and a light is cast
On their white foam-wreaths, from the sudden flashing
Of Tartar spears, whose ranks are thickening fast.
There swells a savage trumpet on the blast,
A music of the deserts, wild and deep,
Wakening strange echoes, as the shores are pass'd
Where low 'midst Ilion's dust her conquerors sleep,
O'ershadowing with high names each rude sepulchral heap.

VI.

War from the West!—the snows on Thracian hills
Are loosed by Spring's warm breath; yet o'er the lands
Which Hæmus girds, the chainless mountain rills
Pour down less swiftly than the Moslem bands.
War from the East!—'midst Araby's lone sands,
More lonely now the few bright founts may be,
While Ismael's bow is bent in warrior-hands
Against the Golden City of the sea:[1]
—Oh! for a soul to fire thy dust, Thermopylæ!

VII.

Hear yet again, ye mighty!—Where are they,
Who, with their green Olympic garlands crown'd,
Leap'd up, in proudly beautiful array,
As to a banquet gathering, at the sound
Of Persia's clarion?—Far and joyous round,
From the pine-forests, and the mountain-snows,
And the low sylvan valleys, to the bound
Of the bright waves, at freedom's voice they rose!
—Hath it no thrilling tone to break the tomb's
repose?

VIII.

They slumber with their swords!—The olive-
shades
In vain are whispering their immortal tale!
In vain the spirit of the past pervades
The soft winds, breathing through each Grecian
vale.
—Yet must *Thou* wake, though all unarm'd and
pale,
Devoted City!—Lo! the Moslem's spear,
Red from its vintage, at thy gates; his sail
Upon thy waves, his trumpet in thine ear!
—Awake! and summon those, who yet, perchance,
may hear!

IX

Be hush'd, thou faint and feeble voice of weeping!
Lift ye the banner of the Cross on high,
And call on chiefs, whose noble sires are sleeping
In their proud graves of sainted chivalry,

Beneath the palms and cedars, where they sigh
To Syrian gales!—The sons of each brave line,
From their baronial halls shall hear your cry,
And seize the arms which flash'd round Salem's shrine,
And wield for you the swords once waved for Palestine!

X.

All still, all voiceless!—and the billow's roar
Alone replies!—Alike *their* soul is gone
Who shared the funeral-feast on Œta's shore,
And *theirs* that o'er the field of Ascalon
Swell'd the crusader's hymn!—Then gird thou on
Thine armour, Eastern Queen! and meet the hour
Which waits thee ere the day's fierce work is done
With a strong heart; so may thy helmet tower
Unshiver'd through the storm, for generous hope is power!

XI.

But linger not,—array thy men of might!
The shores, the seas, are peopled with thy foes.
Arms through thy cypress groves are gleaming bright,
And the dark huntsmen of the wild, repose
Beneath the shadowy marble porticoes
Of thy proud villas. Nearer and more near,
Around thy walls the sons of battle close;
Each hour, each moment, hath its sound of fear,
Which the deep grave alone is charter'd not to hear!

XII.

Away! bring wine, bring odours, to the shade[2]
Where the tall pine and poplar blend on high!
Bring roses, exquisite, but soon to fade!
Snatch every brief delight,—since we must die!—
Yet is the hour, degenerate Greeks! gone by,
For feast in vine-wreath'd bower, or pillar'd hall;
Dim gleams the torch beneath yon fiery sky,
And deep and hollow is the tambour's call,
And from the startled hand th' untasted cup will fall.

XIII.

The night—the glorious oriental night,
Hath lost the silence of her purple heaven,
With its clear stars! The red artillery's light,
Athwart her worlds of tranquil splendour driven,
To the still firmament's expanse hath given
Its own fierce glare, wherein each cliff and tower
Starts wildly forth; and now the air is riven
With thunder-bursts, and now dull smoke-clouds lower,
Veiling the gentle moon, in her most hallow'd hour.

XIV.

Sounds from the waters, sounds upon the earth,
Sounds in the air, of battle! Yet with these
A voice is mingling, whose deep tones give birth
To Faith and Courage! From luxurious ease
A gallant few have started! O'er the seas,
From the Seven Towers,[3] their banner waves its sign,
And Hope is whispering in the joyous breeze,

Which plays amidst its folds. That voice was *thine;*
Thy soul was on that band, devoted Constantine.

XV.

Was Rome thy parent? Didst thou catch from *her*
The fire that lives in thine undaunted eye?
—That city of the throne and sepulchre
Hath given proud lessons how to reign and die!
Heir of the Cæsars! did that lineage high,
Which, as a triumph to the grave, hath pass'd
With its long march of sceptred imag'ry,[4]
Th' heroic mantle o'er thy spirit cast?
—Thou! of an eagle-race the noblest and the last!

XVI.

Vain dreams! upon that spirit hath descended
Light from the living Fountain, whence each thought
Springs pure and holy! In that eye is blended
A spark, with Earth's triumphal memories fraught,
And, far within, a deeper meaning, caught
From worlds unseen. A hope, a lofty trust,
Whose resting-place on buoyant wing is sought
(Though through its veil, seen darkly from the dust),
In realms where Time no more hath power upon the just.

XVII.

Those were proud days, when on the battle plain,
And in the sun's bright face, and 'midst th' array

Of awe-struck hosts, and circled by the slain,
The Roman cast his glittering mail away,[5]
And while a silence, as of midnight, lay
O'er breathless thousands at his voice who started,
Call'd on the unseen, terrific powers that sway
The heights, the depths, the shades; then, fearless-hearted,
Girt on his robe of death, and for the grave departed!

XVIII.

But then, around him as the javelins rush'd,
From earth to heaven swell'd up the loud acclaim;
And, ere his heart's last free libation gush'd,
With a bright smile the warrior caught his name
Far-floating on the winds! And Vict'ry came,
And made the hour of that immortal deed
A life, in fiery feeling! Valour's aim
Had sought no loftier guerdon. Thus to bleed,
Was to be Rome's high star!—He died—and had his meed.

XIX.

But praise—and dearer, holier praise, be theirs,
Who, in the stillness and the solitude
Of hearts press'd earthwards by a weight of cares,
Uncheer'd by Fame's proud hope, th' ethereal food
Of restless energies, and only view'd
By Him whose eye, from his eternal throne,
Is on the soul's dark places; have subdued
And vow'd themselves with strength till then unknown,
To some high martyr-task, in secret and alone.

XX.

Theirs be the bright and sacred names, enshrined
Far in the bosom! for their deeds belong,
Not to the gorgeous faith which charm'd mankind
With its rich pomp of festival and song,
Garland, and shrine, and incense-bearing throng;
But to that Spirit, hallowing, as it tries
Man's hidden soul in whispers, yet more strong
Than storm or earthquake's voice; for *thence* arise
All that mysterious world's unseen sublimities.

XXI.

Well might *thy* name, brave Constantine! awake
Such thought, such feeling!—But the scene again
Bursts on my vision, as the day-beams break
Through the red sulphurous mists: the camp, the plain,
The terraced palaces, the dome-capt fane,
With its bright cross fix'd high in crowning grace;
Spears on the ramparts, galleys on the main,
And, circling all with arms, that turban'd race,
The sun, the desert, stamp'd in each dark haughty face.

XXII.

Shout, ye seven hills! Lo! Christian pennons streaming
Red o'er the waters![6] Hail, deliverers, hail!
Along your billowy wake the radiance gleaming,
Is Hope's own smile! They crowd the swelling sail,
On, with the foam, the sunbeam and the gale,

Borne, as a victor's car! The batteries pour
Their clouds and thunders; but the rolling veil
Of smoke floats up the exulting winds before!
—And oh! the glorious burst of that bright sea and shore!

XXIII.

The rocks, waves, ramparts, Europe's, Asia's coast,
All throng'd! one theatre for kingly war!
A monarch girt with his barbaric host,
Points o'er the beach his flashing scymitar!
Dark tribes are tossing javelins from afar,
Hands waving banners o'er each battlement,
Decks, with their serried guns, array'd to bar
The promised aid: but hark! a shout is sent
Up from the noble barks!—the Moslem line is rent!

XXIV.

On, on through rushing flame, and arrowy shower,
The welcome prows have cleft their rapid way;
And, with the shadows of the vesper hour,
Furl'd their white sails, and anchor'd in the bay.
Then were the streets with song and torch-fire gay,
Then the Greek wines flow'd mantling in the light
Of festal halls—and there was joy!—the ray
Of dying eyes, a moment wildly bright,
The sunset of the soul, ere lost to mortal sight!

XXV.

For vain that feeble succour! Day by day
Th' imperial towers are crumbling, and the sweep

Of the vast engines, in their ceaseless play,
Comes powerful, as when Heaven unbinds the deep!
—Man's heart is mightier than the castled steep,
Yet will it sink when earthly hope is fled;
Man's thoughts work darkly in such hours, and sleep
Flies far; and in *their* mien, the walls who tread,
Things by the brave untold, may fearfully be read!

XXVI.

It was a sad and solemn task, to hold
Their midnight-watch on that beleaguer'd wall!
As the sea-wave beneath the bastions roll'd,
A sound of fate was in its rise and fall;
The heavy clouds were as an empire's pall,
The giant-shadows of each tower and fane
Lay like the grave's; a low mysterious call
Breathed in the wind, and, from the tented plain,
A voice of omens rose with each wild martial strain.

XXVII.

For they might catch the Arab chargers neighing,
The Thracian drum, the Tartar's drowsy song;
Might almost hear the soldan's banner swaying,
The watch-word mutter'd in some eastern tongue.
Then flash'd the gun's terrific light along
The marble streets, all stillness—not repose,
And boding thoughts came o'er them, dark and strong;
For heaven, earth, air, speak auguries to those
Who see their number'd hours fast pressing to the close.

XXVIII.

But strength is from the mightiest! There is one
Still in the breach, and on the rampart seen,
Whose cheek shows paler with each morning sun,
And tells in silence, how the night hath been,
In kingly halls, a vigil: yet serene
The ray set deep within his thoughtful eye;
And there is that in his collected mien,
To which the hearts of noble men reply,
With fires, partaking not this frame's mortality!

XXIX.

Yes! call it not of lofty minds the fate,
To pass o'er earth in brightness, but alone;
High power was made their birthright, to create
A thousand thoughts responsive to their own!
A thousand echoes of their spirit's tone
Start into life, where'er their path may be,
Still following fast; as when the wind hath blown
O'er Indian groves,[7] a wanderer wild and free,
Kindling and bearing flames afar from tree to tree!

XXX.

And it is thus with thee! thy lot is cast
On evil days, thou Cæsar! yet the few
That set their generous bosom to the blast
Which rocks thy throne—the fearless and the true,
Bear hearts wherein thy glance can still renew
The free devotion of the years gone by,
When from bright dreams th' ascendant Roman drew

Enduring strength! States vanish—ages fly—
But leave one task unchanged—to suffer and to die!

XXXI.

These are our nature's heritage. But thou,
The crown'd with empire! thou wert call'd to share
A cup more bitter. On thy fever'd brow
The semblance of that buoyant hope to wear,
Which long had pass'd away; alone to bear
The rush and pressure of dark thoughts, that came
As a strong billow in their weight of care;
And, with all this, to smile! for earth-born frame
These are stern conflicts, yet they pass, unknown to fame!

XXXII.

Her glance is on the triumph, on the field,
On the red scaffold; and where'er, in sight
Of human eyes, the human soul is steel'd
To deeds that seem as of immortal might,
Yet are proud nature's! But her meteor-light
Can pierce no depths, no clouds; it falls not where
In silence, and in secret, and in night,
The noble heart doth wrestle with despair,
And rise more strong than death from its unwitness'd prayer.

XXXIII.

Men have been firm in battle: they have stood
With a prevailing hope on ravaged plains,
And won the birthright of their hearths with blood,
And died rejoicing, 'midst their ancient fanes,

That so their children, undefiled with chains,
Might worship there in peace. But they that stand
When not a beacon o'er the wave remains,
Link'd but to perish with a ruin'd land,
Where Freedom dies with them—call *these* a martyr-band!

XXXIV.

But the world heeds them not. Or if, perchance,
Upon their strife it bend a careless eye,
It is but as the Roman's stoic glance
Fell on that stage where man's last agony
Was made *his* sport, who, knowing *one* must die,
Reck'd not *which* champion; but prepared the strain,
And bound the bloody wreath of victory,
To greet the conqueror; while, with calm disdain,
The vanquish'd proudly met the doom he met in vain.

XXXV.

The hour of Fate comes on! and it is fraught
With *this* of Liberty, that now the need
Is past to veil the brow of anxious thought,
And clothe the heart, which still beneath must bleed,
With Hope's fair-seeming drapery. We are freed
From tasks like these by misery; one alone
Is left the brave, and rest shall be thy meed,
Prince, watcher, wearied one! when thou hast shown
How brief the cloudy space which parts the grave and throne.

XXXVI.

The signs are full. They are not in the sky,
Nor in the many voices of the air,
Nor the swift clouds. No fiery hosts on high
Toss their wild spears: no meteor-banners glare,
No comet fiercely shakes its blazing hair;
And yet the signs are full: too truly seen
In the thinn'd ramparts, in the pale despair
Which lends one language to a people's mien,
And in the ruin'd heaps where walls and towers have been!

XXXVII.

It is a night of beauty: such a night
As, from the sparry grot or laurel-shade,
Or wave in marbled cavern rippling bright,
Might woo the nymphs of Grecian fount and glade
To sport beneath its moonbeams, which pervade
Their forest-haunts; a night, to rove alone
Where the young leaves by vernal winds are sway'd,
And the reeds whisper, with a dreamy tone
Of melody, that seems to breathe from worlds unknown;

XXXVIII.

A night, to call from green Elysium's bowers
The shades of elder bards; a night, to hold
Unseen communion with th' inspiring powers
That made deep groves their dwelling-place of old;
A night, for mourners, o'er the hallow'd mould,

To strew sweet flowers ; for revellers to fill
And wreath the cup ; for sorrows to be told
Which love hath cherish'd long—vain thoughts ! be still !
It is a night of fate, stamp'd with Almighty Will!

XXXIX.

It *should* come sweeping in the storm, and rending
The ancient summits in its dread career !
And with vast billows wrathfully contending,
And with dark clouds o'ershadowing every sphere !
But He, whose footstep shakes the earth with fear,
Passing to lay the sovereign cities low
Alike in His omnipotence is near,
When the soft winds o'er spring's green pathway blow,
And when His thunders cleave the monarch-mountain's brow.

XL.

The heavens in still magnificence look down
On the hush'd Bosphorus, whose ocean-stream
Sleeps, with its paler stars : the snowy crown
Of far Olympus,[8] in the moonlight-gleam
Towers radiantly, as when the Pagan's dream
Throng'd it with gods, and bent th' adoring knee !
—But that is past—and now the One Supreme
Fills not alone *those* haunts ; but earth, air, sea,
And Time, which presses on, to finish his decree.

XLI.

Olympus, Ida, Delphi ! ye, the thrones
And temples of a visionary might,

Brooding in clouds above your forest-zones,
And mantling thence the realms beneath with night:
Ye have look'd down on battles! Fear, and Flight,
And arm'd Revenge, all hurrying past below!
But there is yet a more appalling sight
For earth prepared, than e'er, with tranquil brow,
Ye gazed on from your world of solitude and snow!

XLII.

Last night a sound was in the Moslem camp,
And Asia's hills re-echoed to a cry
Of savage mirth!—Wild horn, and war-steeds' tramp,
Blent with the shout of barbarous revelry,
The clash of desert-spears! Last night the sky
A hue of menace and of wrath put on,
Caught from red watch-fires, blazing far and high,
And countless, as the flames, in ages gone,
Streaming to heaven's bright queen from shadowy Lebanon!

XLIII.

But all is stillness now. May this be sleep
Which wraps those eastern thousands? Yes, perchance
Along yon moonlit shore and dark-blue deep,
Bright are their visions with the Houri's glance,
And they behold the sparkling fountains dance
Beneath the bowers of paradise, that shed
Rich odours o'er the faithful; but the lance,
The bow, the spear, now round the slumberers spread,
Ere Fate fulfil such dreams, must rest beside the dead.

XLIV.

May this be sleep, this hush?—A sleepless eye
Doth hold its vigil 'midst that dusky race!
One that would scan th' abyss of destiny,
E'en now is gazing on the skies, to trace,
In those bright worlds, the burning isles of space,
Fate's mystic pathway: they the while, serene,
Walk in their beauty; but Mohammed's face
Kindles beneath their aspect,[9] and his mien,
All fired with stormy joy, by that soft light is seen.

XLV.

Oh! wild presumption of a conqueror's dream,
To gaze on those pure altar-fires, enshrined
In depths of blue infinitude, and deem
They shine to guide the spoiler of mankind
O'er fields of blood!—But with the restless mind
It hath been ever thus! and they that weep
For worlds to conquer, o'er the bounds assign'd
To human search, in daring pride would sweep,
As o'er the trampled dust wherein they soon must sleep.

XLVI.

But ye! that beam'd on Fate's tremendous night,
When the storm burst o'er golden Babylon,
And ye, that sparkled with your wonted light
O'er burning Salem, by the Roman won;
And ye, that calmly view'd the slaughter done
In Rome's own streets, when Alaric's trumpet-blast
Rung through the Capitol; bright spheres! roll on!

Still bright, though empires fall ; and bid man cast
His humbled eyes to earth, and commune with the
past.

XLVII.

For it hath mighty lessons ! from the tomb,
And from the ruins of the tomb, and where,
'Midst the wreck'd cities in the desert's gloom,
All tameless creatures make their savage lair,
Thence comes its voice, that shakes the midnight
air,
And calls up clouds to dim the laughing day,
And thrills the soul ;—yet bids us not despair,
But make one rock our shelter and our stay,
Beneath whose shade all else is passing to decay !

XLVIII.

The hours move on. I see a wavering gleam
O'er the hush'd waters tremulously fall,
Pour'd from the Cæsar's palace : now the beam
Of many lamps is brightening in the hall,
And from its long arcades and pillars tall
Soft graceful shadows undulating lie
On the wave's heaving bosom, and recall
A thought of Venice, with her moonlight sky,
And festal seas and domes, and fairy pageantry.

XLIX.

But from that dwelling floats no mirthful sound !
The swell of flute and Grecian lyre no more,
Wafting an atmosphere of music round,
Tells the hush'd seaman, gliding past the shore,
How monarchs revel there !—Its feasts are o'er—

Why gleam the lights along its colonnade?
—I see a train of guests in silence pour
Through its long avenues of terraced shade,
Whose stately founts and bowers for joy alone were made!

L.

In silence, and in arms!—With helm—with sword—
These are no marriage-garments!—Yet e'en now
Thy nuptial feast should grace the regal board,
Thy Georgian bride should wreath her lovely brow
With an imperial diadem![10]—but thou,
O fated prince! art call'd, and these with thee,
To darker scenes; and thou hast learn'd to bow
Thine Eastern sceptre to the dread decree,
And count it joy enough to perish—being free!

LI.

On through long vestibules, with solemn tread,
As men, that in some time of fear and wo,
Bear darkly to their rest the noble dead,
O'er whom by day their sorrows may not flow,
The warriors pass: their measured steps are slow,
And hollow echoes fill the marble halls,
Whose long-drawn vistas open as they go
In desolate pomp; and from the pictured walls,
Sad seems the light itself which on their armour falls!

LII.

And they have reach'd a gorgeous chamber, bright
With all we dream of splendour; yet a gloom

Seems gather'd o'er it to the boding sight,
A shadow that anticipates the tomb!
Still from its fretted roof the lamps illume
A purple canopy, a golden throne;
But it is empty!—Hath the stroke of doom
Fallen there already?—Where is He, the One,
Born that high seat to fill, supremely and alone?

LIII.

Oh! there are times whose pressure doth efface
Earth's vain distinctions!—when the storm beats
loud,
When the strong towers are tottering to their
base,
And the streets rock,—who mingle in the crowd?
—Peasant and chief, the lowly and the proud,
Are in that throng!—Yes, life hath many an hour
Which makes us kindred, by one chast'ning bow'd,
And feeling but, as from the storm we cower,
What shrinking weakness feels before unbounded
power!

LIV.

Yet then that Power, whose dwelling is on high,
Its loftiest marvels doth reveal, and speak,
In the deep human heart more gloriously,
Than in the bursting thunder!—Thence the weak,
They that seem'd form'd, as flower-stems, but to
break
With the first wind, have risen to deeds, whose
name
Still calls up thoughts that mantle to the cheek,

And thrill the pulse!—Ay, strength no pangs could tame
Hath look'd from woman's eye upon the sword and flame!

LV.

And this is of such hours!—That throne is void,
And its lord comes uncrown'd. Behold him stand,
With a calm brow, where woes have not destroy'd
The Greek's heroic beauty, 'midst his band,
The gather'd virtue of a sinking land.
Alas! how scanty!—Now is cast aside
All form of princely state; each noble hand
Is press'd by turns in his: for earthly pride
There is no room in hearts where earthly hope hath died!

LVI.

A moment's hush—and then he speaks—he speaks!
But not of hope! *that* dream hath long gone by:
His words are full of memory—as he seeks,
By the strong names of Rome and Liberty,
Which yet are living powers that fire the eye,
And rouse the heart of manhood; and by all
The sad yet grand remembrances that lie
Deep with earth's buried heroes; to recall
The soul of other years, if but to grace their fall!

LVII.

His words are full of faith!—And thoughts, more high
Than Rome e'er knew, now fill his glance with light;

Thoughts which give nobler lessons how to die
Than e'er were drawn from Nature's haughty might!
And to that eye, with all the spirit bright,
Have theirs replied in tears, which may not shame
The bravest in such moments!—'Tis a sight
To make all earthly splendours cold and tame,
—That generous burst of soul, with its electric flame!

LVIII.

They weep—those champions of the Cross—they weep,
Yet vow themselves to death!—Ay, 'midst that train
Are martyrs, privileged in tears to steep
Their lofty sacrifice!—The pang is vain,
And yet its gush of sorrow shall not stain
A warrior's sword.—Those men are strangers here—[11]
The homes they never may behold again,
Lie far away, with all things blest and dear,
On laughing shores, to which their barks no more shall steer!

LIX.

Know'st thou the land where bloom the orange bowers?[12]
Where, through dark foliage, gleam the citron's dyes?
—It is their own. They see their fathers' towers,
'Midst its Hesperian groves in sunlight rise:
They meet in soul, the bright Italian eyes,

Which long and vainly shall explore the main
For their white sails' return: the melodies
Of that sweet land are floating o'er their brain—
Oh! what a crowded world one moment may
contain!

LX.

Such moments come to thousands!—few may die
Amidst their native shades. The young, the brave,
The beautiful, whose gladdening voice and eye
Made summer in a parent's heart, and gave
Light to their peopled homes; o'er land and wave
Are scatter'd fast and far, as rose-leaves fall
From the deserted stem. They find a grave
Far from the shadow of th' ancestral hall,
A lonely bed is theirs, whose smiles were hope to all!

LXI.

But life flows on, and bears us with its tide,
Nor may we, lingering, by the slumberers dwell,
Though they were those once blooming at our side
In youth's gay home!—Away! what sound's deep
swell
Comes on the wind?—It is an empire's knell,
Slow, sad, majestic, pealing through the night!
For the last time speaks forth the solemn bell,
Which calls the Christians to their holiest rite,
With a funereal voice of solitary might.

LXII.

Again, and yet again!—A startling power
In sounds like these lives ever; for they bear,

Full on remembrance, each eventful hour,
Chequering life's crowded path. They fill the air
When conquerors pass, and fearful cities wear
A mien like joy's; and when young brides are led
From their paternal homes; and when the glare
Of burning streets on midnight's cloud waves red,
And when the silent house receives its guest—the dead.[13]

LXIII.

But to those tones what thrilling soul was given,
On that last night of empire!—As a spell
Whereby the life-blood to its source is driven,
On the chill'd heart of multitudes they fell.
Each cadence seem'd a prophecy, to tell
Of sceptres passing from their line away,
An angel-watcher's long and sad farewell,
The requiem of a faith's departing sway,
A throne's, a nation's dirge, a wail for earth's decay.

LXIV.

Again, and yet again!—from yon high dome,
Still the slow peal comes awfully; and they
Who never more, to rest in mortal home,
Shall throw the breastplate off at fall of day,
Th' imperial band, in close and arm'd array,
As men that from the sword must part no more,
Take through the midnight streets their silent way,
Within their ancient temple to adore,
Ere yet its thousand years of Christian pomp are o'er.

LXV.

It is the hour of sleep: yet few the eyes
O'er which forgetfulness her balm hath shed
In the beleaguer'd city. Stillness lies
With moonlight, o'er the hills and waters spread,
But not the less, with signs and sounds of dread,
The time speeds on. No voice is raised to greet
The last brave Constantine; and yet the tread
Of many steps is in the echoing street,
And pressure of pale crowds, scarce conscious why they meet.

LXVI.

Their homes are luxury's yet: why pour they thence
With a dim terror in each restless eye?
Hath the dread car which bears the pestilence,
In darkness, with its heavy wheels roll'd by,
And rock'd their palaces, as if on high
The whirlwind pass'd?—From couch and joyous board
Hath the fierce phantom beckon'd them to die?[14]
—No!—what are these?—for them a cup is pour'd
More dark with wrath;—*Man* comes—the spoiler and the sword.

LXVII.

Still, as the monarch and his chieftains pass
Through those pale throngs, the streaming torch-light throws
On some wild form, amidst the living mass,
Hues, deeply red like lava's, which disclose

What countless shapes are worn by mortal woes!
Lips bloodless, quivering limbs, hands clasp'd in prayer,
Starts, tremblings, hurryings, tears; all outward shows
Betokening inward agonies, were there:
—Greeks! Romans! all but such as image brave despair!

LXVIII.

But high above that scene, in bright repose,
And beauty borrowing from the torches' gleams
A mien of life, yet where no life-blood flows,
But all instinct with loftier being seems,
Pale, grand, colossal; lo! th' embodied dreams
Of yore!—Gods, heroes, bards, in marble wrought,
Look down, as powers, upon the wild extremes
Of mortal passion!—Yet 'twas man that caught,
And in each glorious form enshrined immortal thought!

LXIX.

Stood ye not thus amidst the streets of Rome?
That Rome which witness'd, in her sceptred days,
So much of noble death?—When shrine and dome,
'Midst clouds of incense, rung with choral lays,
As the long triumph pass'd, with all its blaze
Of regal spoil, were ye not proudly borne,
O sovereign forms! concent'ring all the rays
Of the soul's lightnings?—did ye not adorn
The pomp which earth stood still to gaze on, and to mourn?

LXX.

Hath it been thus?—Or did ye grace the halls,
Once peopled by the mighty?—Haply there,
In your still grandeur, from the pillar'd walls
Serene ye smiled on banquets of despair,[15]
Where hopeless courage wrought itself to dare
The stroke of its deliverance, 'midst the glow
Of living wreaths, the sighs of perfumed air,
The sound of lyres, the flower-crown'd goblet's flow:
—Behold again!—high hearts make nobler offerings now!

LXXI.

The stately fane is reach'd—and at its gate
The warriors pause; on life's tumultuous tide
A stillness falls, while he whom regal state
Hath mark'd from all, to be more sternly tried
By suffering, speaks:—each ruder voice hath died,
While his implores forgiveness!—"If there be
One 'midst your throngs, my people! whom, in pride
Or passion, I have wrong'd; such pardon, free
As mortals hope from Heaven, accord that man to me!"

LXXII.

But all is silence; and a gush of tears
Alone replies!—He hath not been of those
Who, fear'd by many, pine in secret fears
Of all; th' environ'd but by slaves and foes,
To whom day brings not safety, night repose,

For they have *heard the voice cry*, "*Sleep no more!*"
Of them he hath not been, nor such as close
Their hearts to misery, till the time is o'er,
When it speaks low and kneels th' oppressor's throne before!

LXXIII.

He hath been loved—but who may trust the love
Of a degenerate race?—in other mould
Are cast the free and lofty hearts, that prove
Their faith through fiery trials.—Yet behold,
And call him not forsaken!—Thoughts untold
Have lent his aspect calmness, and his tread
Moves firmly to the shrine.—What pomps unfold
Within its precincts!—Isles and seas have shed
Their gorgeous treasures there, around th' imperial dead.

LXXIV.

'Tis a proud vision—that most regal pile
Of ancient days!—The lamps are streaming bright
From its rich altar, down each pillar'd aisle,
Whose vista fades in dimness; but the sight
Is lost in splendours, as the wavering light
Developes, on those walls, the thousand dyes
Of the vein'd marbles, which array their height,
And from yon dome, the lode-star of all eyes,[16]
Pour such an iris-glow as emulates the skies.

LXXV.

But gaze thou not on these; though heaven's own hues,
In their soft clouds and radiant tracery vie;

Though tints, of sun-born glory, may suffuse
Arch, column, rich mosaic: pass thou by
The stately tombs, where eastern Cæsars lie,
Beneath their trophies; pause not here; for know,
A deeper source of all sublimity
Lives in man's bosom, than the world can show,
In nature or in art—above, around, below.

LXXVI.

Turn thou to mark (though tears may dim thy gaze)
The steel-clad group before yon altar-stone:
Heed not though gems and gold around it blaze;
Those heads unhelm'd, those kneeling forms alone,
Thus bow'd, look glorious here. The light is thrown
Full from the shrine on one, a nation's lord,
A sufferer!—but his task shall soon be done—
E'en now, as Faith's mysterious cup is pour'd,
See to that noble brow, peace, not of earth, restored!

LXXVII.

The rite is o'er. The band of brethren part,
Once—and *but* once—to meet on earth again!
Each, in the strength of a collected heart,
To dare what man may dare—and know 'tis vain!
The rite is o'er: and thou, majestic fane!—
The glory is departed from thy brow!—
Be clothed with dust!—the Christian's farewell strain
Hath died within thy walls; thy Cross must bow;
Thy kingly tombs be spoil'd; thy golden shrines laid low!

LXXVIII.

The streets grow still and lonely—and the star,
The last bright lingerer in the path of morn,
Gleams faint; and in the very lap of war,
As if young Hope with twilight's ray were born,
Awhile the city sleeps:—her throngs, o'erworn
With fears and watchings, to their homes retire;
Nor is the balmy air of dayspring torn
With battle-sounds[17]; the winds in sighs expire,
And quiet broods in mists that veil the sunbeam's fire.

LXXIX.

The city sleeps!—ay! on the combat's eve,
And by the scaffold's brink, and 'midst the swell
Of angry seas, hath Nature won reprieve
Thus from her cares. The brave have slumber'd well,
And e'en the fearful, in their dungeon-cell,
Chain'd between life and death!—Such rest be thine,
For conflicts wait thee still!—Yet who can tell
In that brief hour, how much of heaven may shine
Full on thy spirit's dream?—Sleep, weary Constantine!

LXXX.

Doth the blast rise?—the clouded east is red,
As if a storm were gathering; and I hear
What seems like heavy rain-drops, or the tread,
The soft and smother'd step of those that fear
Surprise from ambush'd foes. Hark! yet more near

It comes, a many-toned and mingled sound;
A rustling, as of winds, where boughs are sear,
A rolling, as of wheels that shake the ground
From far; a heavy rush, like seas that burst their bound!

LXXXI.

Wake, wake! They come from sea and shore, ascending
In hosts your ramparts! Arm ye for the day!
Who now may sleep amidst the thunders rending,
Through tower and wall, a path for their array?
Hark! how the trumpet cheers them to the prey,
With its wild voice, to which the seas reply,
And the earth rocks beneath their engines' sway,
And the far hills repeat their battle-cry,
Till that fierce tumult seems to shake the vaulted sky!

LXXXII.

They fail not now, the generous band, that long
Have ranged their swords around a falling throne;
Still in those fearless men the walls are strong,
Hearts, such as rescue empires, are their own!
—Shall those high energies be vainly shown?
No! from their towers th' invading tide is driven
Back, like the Red-sea waves, when God had blown
With his strong winds!—the dark-brow'd ranks are riven— [18]
Shout, warriors of the cross!—for victory is of Heaven!

LXXXIII.

Stand firm!—Again the crescent host is rushing,
And the waves foam, as on the galleys sweep,
With all their fires and darts, though blood is gushing
Fast o'er their sides, as rivers to the deep.
Stand firm!—there yet is hope, th' ascent is steep,
And from on high no shaft descends in vain;
—But those that fall swell up the mangled heap,
In the red moat, the dying and the slain,
And o'er that fearful bridge th' assailants mount again!

LXXXIV.

Oh! the dread mingling, in that awful hour,
Of all terrific sounds!—the savage tone
Of the wild horn, the cannon's peal, the shower
Of hissing darts, the crash of walls o'erthrown,
The deep dull tambour's beat—man's voice alone
Is there unheard! Ye may not catch the cry
Of trampled thousands—prayer, and shriek, and moan,
All drown'd, as that fierce hurricane sweeps by,
But swell the unheeded sum earth pays for victory!

LXXXV.

War-clouds have wrapt the city!—through their dun,
O'erloaded canopy, at times a blaze,
As of an angry storm-presaging sun,
From the Greek fire shoots up;[19] and lightning rays

Flash, from the shock of sabres, through the haze,
And glancing arrows cleave the dusky air!
—Ay! *this* is in the compass of our gaze,—
But fearful things, unknown, untold, are there,
Workings of wrath and death, and anguish, and despair!

LXXXVI.

Woe, shame and woe!—A chief, a warrior flies,
A red-cross champion, bleeding, wild, and pale!
—O God! that nature's passing agonies,
Thus, o'er the spark which dies not, should prevail!
Yes! rend the arrow from thy shatter'd mail,
And stanch the blood-drops, Genoa's fallen son![20]
Fly swifter yet! the javelins pour as hail!
—But there are tortures which thou canst not shun,
The spirit is *their* prey—thy pangs are but begun!

LXXXVII.

Oh, happy in their homes, the noble dead!
The seal is set on their majestic fame;
Earth has drunk deep the generous blood they shed,
Fate has no power to dim their stainless name!
They may not, in one bitter moment, shame
Long glorious years; from many a lofty stem
Fall graceful flowers, and eagle-hearts grow tame,
And stars drop, fading, from the diadem;
But the bright *past* is theirs—there is no change for *them!*

LXXXVIII.

Where art thou, Constantine?—where death is reaping
His sevenfold harvest!—where the stormy light,
Fast as th' artillery's thunderbolts are sweeping,
Throws meteor-bursts o'er battle's noonday-night!
Where the towers rock and crumble from their height,
As to the earthquake, and the engines ply,
Like red Vesuvio; and where human might
Confronts all this, and still brave hearts beat high,
While scymitars ring loud on shivering panoply.

LXXXIX.

Where art thou, Constantine?—where Christian blood
Hath bathed the walls in torrents, and in vain!
Where faith and valour perish in the flood,
Whose billows, rising o'er their bosoms, gain
Dark strength each moment: where the gallant slain
Around the banner of the cross lie strew'd,
Thick as the vine-leaves on th' autumnal plain;
Where all, save one high spirit, is subdued,
And through the breach press on th' o'erwhelming multitude.

XC.

Now is he battling 'midst a host alone,
As the last cedar stems awhile the sway
Of mountain-storms, whose fury hath o'erthrown
Its forest-brethren in their green array!

And he hath cast his purple robe away,
With its imperial bearings; that his sword
An iron ransom from the chain may pay,
And win, what haply fate may yet accord,
A soldier's death—the all now left an empire's lord!

XCI.

Search for him now where bloodiest lie the files
Which once were men, the faithful and the brave!
Search for him now where loftiest rise the piles
Of shatter'd helms and shields, which could not save;
And crests and banners, never more to wave
In the free winds of heaven! He is of those
O'er whom the host may rush, the tempest rave,
And the steeds trample, and the spearmen close,
Yet wake them not!—so deep their long and last repose!

XCII.

Woe to the vanquish'd!—thus it hath been still
Since Time's first march!—Hark, hark, a people's cry!
Ay, now the conquerors in the streets fulfil
Their task of wrath! In vain the victims fly;
Hark! now each piercing tone of agony
Blends in the city's shriek! The lot is cast.
Slaves, 'twas your *choice* thus, rather thus, to die,
Than where the warrior's blood flows warm and fast,
And roused and mighty hearts beat proudly to the last!

XCIII.

Oh! well doth freedom battle! Men have made,
E'en 'midst their blazing roofs, a noble stand,
And on the floors, where once their children play'd
And by the hearths, round which their household band
At evening met; ay, struggling hand to hand,
Within the very chambers of their sleep,
There have they taught the spoilers of the land,
In chainless hearts what fiery strength lies deep,
To guard free homes!—but ye!—kneel, tremblers! kneel, and weep!

XCIV.

'Tis eve—the storm hath died, the valiant rest
Low on their shields; the day's fierce work is done,
And blood-stain'd seas, and burning towers attest
Its fearful deeds. An empire's race is run!
Sad, 'midst his glory, looks the parting sun
Upon the captive city. Hark! a swell
(Meet to proclaim barbaric war-fields won)
Of fierce triumphal sounds, that wildly tell
The Soldan comes within the Cæsars' halls to dwell!

XCV.

Yes! with the peal of cymbal and of gong,
He comes,—the Moslem treads those ancient halls!
But all is stillness there, as death had long
Been lord alone within those gorgeous walls.
And half that silence of the grave appals

The conqueror's heart. Ay, thus with triumph's hour,
Still comes the boding whisper, which recalls
A thought of those impervious clouds that lower
O'er grandeur's path, a sense of some far mightier Power!

XCVI.

"The owl upon Afrasiab's towers hath sung
Her watch-song,[21] and around th' imperial throne
The spider weaves his web!" Still darkly hung
That verse of omen, as a prophet's tone,
O'er his flush'd spirit. Years on years have flown
To prove its truth: kings pile their domes in air,
That the coil'd snake may bask on sculptured stone,
And nations clear the forest, to prepare
For the wild fox and wolf more stately dwellings there!

XCVII.

But thou! that on thy ramparts proudly dying,
As a crown'd leader in such hours should die,
Upon thy pyre of shiver'd spears art lying,
With the heavens o'er thee for a canopy,
And banners for thy shroud! No tear, no sigh,
Shall mingle with thy dirge; for thou art now
Beyond vicissitude! Lo! rear'd on high,
The Crescent blazes, while the Cross must bow;
But where no change can reach, there, Constantine, art thou!

XCVIII.

"After life's fitful fever thou sleep'st well!"
We may not mourn thee! Sceptred chiefs, from whom

The earth received her destiny, and fell
Before them trembling—to a sterner doom
Have oft been call'd. For them the dungeon's gloom,
With its cold starless midnight, hath been made
More fearful darkness, where, as in a tomb,
Without a tomb's repose, the chain hath weigh'd
Their very soul to dust, with each high power decay'd.

XCIX.

Or in the eye of thousands they have stood,
To meet the stroke of death; but not like thee!
From bonds and scaffolds hath appeal'd *their* blood,
But thou didst fall unfetter'd, arm'd, and free,
And kingly to the last!—And if it be,
That, from the viewless world, whose marvels none
Return to tell, a spirit's eye can see
The things of earth; still may'st thou hail the sun,
Which o'er thy land shall dawn, when freedom's fight is won!

C.

And the hour comes, in storm! A light is glancing
Far through the forest-god's Arcadian shades!
—'Tis not the moonbeam, tremulously dancing,
Where lone Alpheus bathes his haunted glades;
A murmur, gathering power, the air pervades,
Round dark Cithæron, and by Delphi's steep;
—'Tis not the song and lyre of Grecian maids,

Nor pastoral reed that lulls the vales to sleep,
Nor yet the rustling pines, nor yet the sounding deep!

CI.

Arms glitter on the mountains, which, of old,
Awoke to freedom's first heroic strain,
And by the streams, once crimson, as they roll'd
The Persian helm and standard to the main;
And the blue waves of Salamis again
Thrill to the trumpet; and the tombs reply,
With their ten thousand echoes, from each plain,
Far as Platæa's, where the mighty lie,
Who crown'd so proudly there the bowl of liberty![29]

CII.

Bright land, with glory mantled o'er by song!
Land of the vision-peopled hills, and streams,
And fountains, whose deserted banks along,
Still the soft air with inspiration teems;
Land of the graves, whose dwellers shall be themes
To verse for ever; and of ruin'd shrines,
That scarce look desolate beneath such beams,
As bathe in gold thine ancient rocks and pines?
—When shall thy sons repose in peace beneath their vines?

CIII.

Thou wert not made for bonds, nor shame, nor fear!
—Do the hoar oaks and dark-green laurels wave
O'er Mantinea's earth?—doth Pindus rear
His snows, the sunbeam, and the storm to brave?

And is there yet on Marathon a grave?
And doth Eurotas lead his silvery line
By Sparta's ruins?—And shall man, a slave,
Bow'd to the dust, amid such scenes repine?
—If e'er a soil was mark'd for freedom's step—'tis thine!

CIV.

Wash from that soil the stains, with battle-showers!
—Beneath Sophia's dome the Moslem prays,
The crescent gleams amidst the olive-bowers,
In the Comneni's halls the Tartar sways:[23]
But not for long!—the spirit of those days,
When the three hundred made their funeral pile
Of Asia's dead, is kindling, like the rays
Of thy rejoicing sun, when first his smile
Warms the Parnassian rock, and gilds the Delian isle.

CV.

If then 'tis given thee to arise in might,
Trampling the scourge, and dashing down the chain,
Pure be thy triumphs, as thy name is bright!
The cross of victory should not know a stain!
So may that faith once more supremely reign,
Through which we lift our spirits from the dust!
And deem not, e'en when virtue dies in vain,
She dies forsaken; but repose our trust
On Him whose ways are dark, unsearchable—but just.

NOTES.

Note 1, page 180, line 21.

While Ismael's bow, &c.

The army of Mohammed the Second, at the siege of Constantinople, was thronged with fanatics of all sects and nations, who were not enrolled amongst the regular troops. The Sultan himself marched upon the city from Adrianople; but his army must have been principally collected in the Asiatic provinces, which he had previously visited.

Note 2, page 183, line 1.

Away! bring wine, bring odours, &c.

"Huc vina, et unguenta, et nimium breves
Flores amœnæ ferre jube rosæ."

Hor. lib. ii. od. 3.

Note 3, page 183, line 24.

From the Seven Towers, &c.

The castle of the Seven Towers is mentioned in the Byzantine history, as early as the sixth century of the Christian era, as an edifice which contributed materially to the defence of Constantinople; and it was the principal bulwark of the town on the coast of the Propontis, in the later periods of the empire. For a description of this building, see POUQUEVILLE'S *Travels.*

Note 4, page 184, line 9.

With its long march of sceptred imag'ry.

An allusion to the Roman custom of carrying in pro-

cession, at the funerals of their great men, the images of their ancestors.

Note 5, page 185, line 2.

The Roman cast his glittering mail away.

The following was the ceremony of consecration with which Decius devoted himself in battle:—He was ordered by Valerius, the Pontifex Maximus, to quit his military habit, and put on the robe he wore in the senate. Valerius then covered his head with a veil, commanded him to put forth his hand under his robe to his chin, and, standing with both feet upon a javelin, to repeat these words: —"O Janus, Jupiter, Mars, Romulus, Bellona! and ye, Lares and Novensiles! All ye heroes who dwell in heaven! and all ye gods who rule over us and our enemies—especially ye gods of hell!—I honour you, invoke you, and humbly entreat you to prosper the arms of the Romans, and to transfer all fear and terror from them to their enemies; and I do, for the safety of the Roman people, and their legions, devote myself, and with myself the army and auxiliaries of the enemy, to the infernal gods, and the goddess of the earth." Decius then, girding his robe around him, mounted his horse, and rode full speed into the thickest of the enemy's battalions. The Latins were, for a while, thunderstruck at this spectacle; but at length recovering themselves, they discharged a shower of darts, under which the Consul fell.

Note 6, page 186, line 20.

Shout, ye seven hills! Lo! Christian pennons streaming
Red o'er the waters.

See Gibbon's animated description of the arrival of five Christian ships, with men and provisions, for the succour of the besieged, not many days before the fall of Constantinople.—*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. xii. p. 215.

Note 7, page 189, line 17.

As when the wind hath blown
O'er Indian groves, &c.

The summits of the lofty rocks in the Carnatic, particularly about the Ghauts, are sometimes covered with the bamboo tree, which grows in thick clumps, and is of such uncommon aridity, that in the sultry season of the year the friction occasioned by a strong dry wind will literally produce sparks of fire, which frequently setting the woods in a blaze, exhibit to the spectator stationed in a valley surrounded by rocks, a magnificent though imperfect circle of fire.—*Notes to* KINDERSLEY'S *Specimens of Hindoo Literature.*

Note 8, page 193, line 17.

——— *The snowy crown*
Of far Olympus, &c.

Those who steer their westward course through the middle of the Propontis, may at once descry the high lands of Thrace and Bithynia, and never lose sight of the lofty summit of Mount Olympus, covered with eternal snows.—*Decline and Fall, &c.*, vol. iii. p. 8.

Note 9, page 195, line 8.

——— *Mohammed's face*
Kindles beneath their aspect, &c.

Mohammed II. was greatly addicted to the study of astrology. His calculations in this science led him to fix upon the morning of the 29th of May as the fortunate hour for a general attack upon the city.

Note 10, page 197, line 9.

Thy Georgian bride, &c.

Constantine Palæologus was betrothed to a Georgian princess; and the very spring which witnessed the fall of Constantinople had been fixed upon as the time for conveying the imperial bride to that city.

Note 11, page 200, line 13.

Those men are strangers here.

Many of the adherents of Constantine, in his last noble stand for the liberties, or rather the honour, of a falling empire, were foreigners, and chiefly Italians.

Note 12, page 200, line 17.

Know'st thou the land, &c.

This and the next line are an almost literal translation from a beautiful song of Goethe's:—

"Kennst du das land, wo die zitronen blühn,
Mit dunkeln laub die gold orangen glühn?" &c.

Note 13, page 202, line 7.

The idea expressed in this stanza is beautifully amplified in Schiller's poem, "Das Lied der Glocke."

Note 14, page 203, line 16.

Hath the fierce phantom, &c.

It is said to be a Greek superstition that the plague is announced by the heavy rolling of an invisible chariot, heard in the streets at midnight; and also by the appearance of a gigantic spectre, who summons the devoted person by name.

Note 15, page 205, line 4.

Ye smiled on banquets of despair.

Many instances of such banquets, given and shared by persons resolved upon death, might be adduced from ancient history. That of Vibius Virius, at Capua, is amongst the most memorable.

Note 16, page 206, line 21.

Yon dome, the lode-star of all eyes.

For a minute description of the marbles, jaspers, and

porphyries, employed in the construction of St. Sophia, see *The Decline and Fall*, &c., vol. vii. page 120.

Note 17, page 208, line 8.

Nor is the balmy air of dayspring torn
With battle-sounds, &c.

The assault of the city took place at daybreak, and the Turks were strictly enjoined to advance in silence, which had also been commanded, on pain of death, during the preceding night. This circumstance is finely alluded to by Miss Baillie, in her tragedy of *Constantine Palæologus:*

> "Silent shall be the march; nor drum, nor trump,
> Nor clash of arms, shall to the watchful foe
> Our near approach betray: silent and soft,
> As the pard's velvet foot on Lybia's sands,
> Slow stealing with crouch'd shoulders on her prey."
> *Constantine Palæologus*, act iv.

"The march and labour of thousands" must, however, as Gibbon observes, "have inevitably produced a strange confusion of discordant clamours, which reached the ears of the watchmen on the towers."

Note 18, page 209, line 21.

The dark-brow'd ranks are riven.

"After a conflict of two hours, the Greeks still maintained and preserved their advantage," says Gibbon. The strenuous exertions of the janizaries first turned the fortune of the day.

Note 19, page 210, last line.

From the Greek fire shoots up, &c.

"A circumstance that distinguishes the siege of Constantinople is the union of the ancient and modern artillery. The bullet and the battering-ram were directed against the same wall; nor had the discovery of gunpowder superseded the use of the liquid and inextinguishable fire."—*Decline and Fall*, &c., vol. xii. page 213.

Note 20, page 211, line 11.

And stanch the blood-drops, Genoa's fallen son!

"The immediate loss of Constantinople may be ascribed to the bullet, or arrow, which pierced the gauntlet of John Justiniani (a Genoese chief). The sight of his blood, and exquisite pain, appalled the courage of the chief, whose arms and counsels were the firmest rampart of the city."—*Decline and Fall*, &c., vol. xii. page 229.

Note 21, page 215, line 6.

"*The owl upon Afrasiab's towers hath sung*
Her watch-song," *&c.*

Mohammed II., on entering, after his victory, the palace of the Byzantine emperors, was strongly impressed with the silence and desolation which reigned within its precincts. "A melancholy reflection on the vicissitudes of human greatness forced itself on his mind, and he repeated an elegant distich of Persian poetry: 'The spider has wove his web in the imperial palace, and the owl hath sung her watch-song on the towers of Afrasiab.'"—*Decline and Fall*, &c., vol. xii. page 240.

Note 22, page 217, line 11.

The bowl of liberty.

One of the ceremonies by which the battle of Platæa was annually commemorated was, to crown with wine a cup called the *Bowl of Liberty*, which was afterwards poured forth in libation.

Note 23, page 218, line 9.

In the Comneni's halls the Tartar sways.

The Comneni were amongst the most distinguished of the families who filled the Byzantine throne in the declining years of the eastern empire.

GREEK SONGS.

I.—THE STORM OF DELPHI.*

FAR through the Delphian shades
An Eastern trumpet rung!
And the startled eagle rush'd on high,
With a sounding flight through the fiery sky;
And banners, o'er the shadowy glades,
To the sweeping winds were flung.

Banners, with deep-red gold
All waving as a flame,
And a fitful glance from the bright spear-head
On the dim wood-paths of the mountain shed,
And a peal of Asia's war-notes told
That in arms the Persian came.

He came with starry gems
On his quiver and his crest;
With starry gems, at whose heart the day
Of the cloudless orient burning lay,
And they cast a gleam on the laurel-stems,
As onward his thousands press'd.

* See the account cited from Herodotus, in Mitford's *Greece*.

But a gloom fell o'er their way,
And a heavy moan went by!
A moan, yet not like the wind's low swell,
When its voice grows wild amidst cave and dell,
But a mortal murmur of dismay,
Or a warrior's dying sigh!

A gloom fell o'er their way!
'Twas not the shadow cast
By the dark pine boughs, as they cross'd the blue
Of the Grecian heavens with their solemn hue;—
The air was fill'd with a mightier sway—
But on the spearmen pass'd!

And hollow to their tread,
Came the echoes of the ground,
And banners droop'd, as with dews o'erborne,
And the wailing blast of the battle horn
Had an alter'd cadence, dull and dead,
Of strange foreboding sound.

But they blew a louder strain,
When the steep defiles were pass'd!
And afar the crown'd Parnassus rose,
To shine through heaven with his radiant snows,
And in golden light the Delphian fane
Before them stood at last!

In golden light it stood,
'Midst the laurels gleaming lone,
For the Sun-god yet, with a lovely smile,
O'er its graceful pillars look'd awhile,

Though the stormy shade on cliff and wood
Grew deep round its mountain-throne.

And the Persians gave a shout!
But the marble-walls replied,
With a clash of steel and a sullen roar
Like heavy wheels on the ocean-shore,
And a savage trumpet's note peal'd out,
Till their hearts for terror died!

On the armour of the god,
Then a viewless hand was laid;
There were helm and spear, with a clanging din,
And corslet brought from the shrine within,
From the inmost shrine of the dread abode,
And before its front array'd.

And a sudden silence fell
Through the dim and loaded air!
On the wild-bird's wing, and the myrtle spray,
And the very founts, in their silvery way,
With a weight of sleep came down the spell,
Till man grew breathless there.

But the pause was broken soon!
'Twas not by song or lyre;
For the Delphian maids had left their bowers,
And the hearths were lone in the city's towers,
But there burst a sound through the misty noon—
That battle-noon of fire!

It burst from earth and heaven!
It roll'd from crag and cloud!
For a moment of the mountain-blast,
With a thousand stormy voices pass'd,
And the purple gloom of the sky was riven,
When the thunder peal'd aloud.

And the lightnings in their play
Flash'd forth, like javelins thrown;
Like sun-darts wing'd from the silver bow,
They smote the spear and the turban'd brow,
And the bright gems flew from the crests like spray,
And the banners were struck down!

And the massy oak-boughs crash'd
To the fire-bolts from on high,
And the forest lent its billowy roar,
While the glorious tempest onward bore,
And lit the streams, as they foam'd and dash'd,
With the fierce rain sweeping by.

Then rush'd the Delphian men
On the pale and scatter'd host;
Like the joyous burst of a flashing wave,
They rush'd from the dim Corycian cave,
And the singing blast o'er wood and glen
Roll'd on, with the spears they toss'd.

There were cries of wild dismay,
There were shouts of warrior-glee,
There were savage sounds of the tempest's mirth,
That shook the realm of their eagle-birth;

But the mount of song, when they died away,
Still rose, with its temple, free!

And the Pæan swell'd erelong,
Io Pæan! from the fane;
Io Pæan! for the war-array,
On the crown'd Parnassus riven that day!
—Thou shalt rise *as* free, thou mount of song!
With thy bounding streams again.

II.—THE BOWL OF LIBERTY.*

Before the fiery sun,
The sun that looks on Greece with cloudless eye,
In the free air, and on the war-field won,
Our fathers crown'd the Bowl of Liberty.

Amidst the tombs they stood,
The tombs of heroes! with the solemn skies,
And the wide plain around, where patriot-blood
Had steep'd the soil in hues of sacrifice.

They call'd the glorious dead,
In the strong faith which brings the viewless nigh,
And pour'd rich odours o'er their battle-bed,
And bade them to their rite of Liberty.

* This and the following piece appeared originally in the *New Monthly Magazine*.

They call'd them from the shades,
The golden-fruited shades, where minstrels tell
How softer light th' immortal clime pervades,
And music floats o'er meads of Asphodel.

Then fast the bright-red wine*
Flow'd to *their* names who taught the world to die
And made the land's green turf a living shrine,
Meet for the wreath and Bowl of Liberty.

So the rejoicing earth
Took from her vines again the blood she gave,
And richer flowers to deck the tomb drew birth
From the free soil thus hallow'd to the brave.

We have the battle-fields,
The tombs, the names, the blue majestic sky,
We have the founts the purple vintage yields;
—When shall *we* crown the Bowl of Liberty?

III.—THE VOICE OF SCIO.

A VOICE from Scio's isle—
A voice of song, a voice of old
Swept far as cloud or billow roll'd,
And earth was hush'd the while—

* For an account of this ceremony, anciently performed in commemoration of the battle of Platæa, see POTTER's *Antiquities of Greece*, vol. i. p. 389.

The souls of nations woke!
Where lies the land whose hills among,
That voice of Victory hath not rung,
As if a trumpet spoke?

To sky, and sea, and shore,
Of those whose blood, on Ilion's plain,
Swept from the rivers to the main,
A glorious tale it bore.

Still, by our sun-bright deep,
With all the fame that fiery lay
Threw round them, in its rushing way,
The sons of battle sleep.

And kings their turf have crown'd!
And pilgrims o'er the foaming wave
Brought garlands there: so rest the brave,
Who thus their bard have found!

A voice from Scio's isle,
A voice as deep hath risen again
As far shall peal its thrilling strain,
Where'er our sun may smile!

Let not its tones expire!
Such power to waken earth and heaven,
And might and vengeance, ne'er was given
To mortal song or lyre!

Know ye not whence it comes?
—From ruin'd hearths, from burning fanes,

From kindred blood on yon red plains,
From desolated homes!

'Tis with us through the night!
'Tis on our hills, 'tis in our sky—
Hear it, ye heavens! when swords flash high,
O'er the mid-waves of fight!

IV.—THE SPARTANS' MARCH.*

"The Spartans used not the trumpet in their march into battle," says Thucydides, "because they wished not to excite the rage of their warriors. Their charging-step was made to the 'Dorian mood of flutes and soft recorders.' The valour of a Spartan was too highly tempered to require a stunning or a rousing impulse. His spirit was like a steed too proud for the spur."

CAMPBELL *on the Elegiac Poetry of the Greeks.*

'TWAS morn upon the Grecian hills,
Where peasants dress'd the vines;
Sunlight was on Cithæron's rills,
Arcadia's rocks and pines.

And brightly, through his reeds and flowers,
Eurotas wander'd by,
When a sound arose from Sparta's towers
Of solemn harmony.

Was it the hunters' choral strain
To the woodland-goddess pour'd?
Did virgin hands in Pallas' fane
Strike the full sounding chord?

* Originally published in the *Edinburgh Magazine.*

But helms were glancing on the stream,
Spears ranged in close array,
And shields flung back a glorious beam
To the morn of a fearful day!

And the mountain-echoes of the land
Swell'd through the deep-blue sky;
While to soft strains moved forth a band
Of men that moved to die.

They march'd not with the trumpet's blast,
Nor bade the horn peal out,
And the laurel groves, as on they pass'd,
Rung with no battle shout!

They ask'd no clarion's voice to fire
Their souls with an impulse high;
But the Dorian reed and the Spartan lyre
For the sons of liberty!

And still sweet flutes, their path around
Sent forth Æolian breath;
They needed not a sterner sound
To marshal them for death!

So moved they calmly to their field,
Thence never to return,
Save bearing back the Spartan shield,
Or on it proudly borne!

V.—THE URN AND SWORD.

They sought for treasures in the tomb,
Where gentler hands were wont to spread
Fresh boughs and flowers of purple bloom,
And sunny ringlets, for the dead.*

They scatter'd far the greensward heap,
Where once those hands the bright wine pour'd;
—What found they in the home of sleep?—
A mouldering urn, a shiver'd sword!

An urn, which held the dust of one
Who died when hearths and shrines were free;
A sword, whose work was proudly done
Between our mountains and the sea.

And these are treasures!—undismay'd,
Still for the suffering land we trust,
Wherein the past its fame hath laid,
With freedom's sword, and valour's dust.

VI.—THE MYRTLE BOUGH.

Still green, along our sunny shore,
The flowering myrtle waves,
As when its fragrant boughs of yore
Were offer'd on the graves—

* See Potter's *Grecian Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 234.

The graves, wherein our mighty men
Had rest, unviolated then.

Still green it waves! as when the hearth
  Was sacred through the land;
And fearless was the banquet's mirth,
  And free the minstrel's hand;
And guests, with shining myrtle crown'd,
Sent the wreath'd lyre and wine-cup round.

Still green! as when on holy ground
  The tyrant's blood was pour'd:
Forget ye not what garlands bound
  The young deliverer's sword!
Though earth may shroud Harmodius now,
We still have sword and myrtle bough!

ELYSIUM.

" In the Elysium of the ancients, we find none but heroes and persons who had either been fortunate or distinguished on earth; the children, and apparently the slaves and lower classes, that is to say, Poverty, Misfortune, and Innocence, were banished to the infernal Regions."

CHATEAUBRIAND, *Génie du Christianisme.*

FAIR wert thou in the dreams
Of elder time, thou land of glorious flowers
And summer winds and low-toned silvery streams,
Dim with the shadows of thy laurel bowers,
Where, as they pass'd, bright hours
Left no faint sense of parting, such as clings
To earthly love, and joy in loveliest things!

Fair wert thou, with the light
On thy blue hills and sleepy waters cast,
From purple skies ne'er deep'ning into night,
Yet soft, as if each moment were their last
Of glory, fading fast
Along the mountains!—but *thy* golden day
Was not as those that warn us of decay.

And ever, through thy shades,
A swell of deep Æolian sound went by,
From fountain-voices in their secret glades,
And low reed-whispers, making sweet reply
To summer's breezy sigh,
And young leaves trembling to the wind's light breath,
Which ne'er had touch'd them with a hue of death!

And the transparent sky
Rung as a dome, all thrilling to the strain
Of harps that, 'midst the woods, made harmony
Solemn and sweet; yet troubling not the brain
With dreams and yearnings vain,
And dim remembrances, that still draw birth
From the bewild'ring music of the earth.

And who, with silent tread,
Moved o'er the plains of waving asphodel?
Call'd from the dim procession of the dead,
Who, 'midst the shadowy amaranth-bowers might dwell,
And listen to the swell
Of those majestic hymn-notes, and inhale
The spirit wand'ring in the immortal gale?

They of the sword, whose praise,
With the bright wine at nations' feasts, went round!
They of the lyre, whose unforgotten lays
Forth on the winds had sent their mighty sound,
And in all regions found
Their echoes 'midst the mountains!—and become
In man's deep heart as voices of his home!

They of the daring thought!
Daring and powerful, yet to dust allied—
Whose flight through stars, and seas, and depths, had sought
The soul's far birthplace—but without a guide!
Sages and seers, who died,
And left the world their high mysterious dreams,
Born 'midst the olive woods, by Grecian streams.

But the most *loved* are they
Of whom fame speaks not with her clarion voice,
In regal halls!—the shades o'erhang their way,
The vale, with its deep fountains, is their choice,
And gentle hearts rejoice
Around their steps; till silently they die,
As a stream shrinks from summer's burning eye.

And these—of whose abode,
'Midst her green valleys, earth retain'd no trace,
Save a flower springing from their burial-sod,
A shade of sadness on some kindred face,
A dim and vacant place
In some sweet home;—thou hadst no wreaths for *these*,
Thou sunny land! with all thy deathless trees!

The peasant at his door
Might sink to die when vintage feasts were spread,
And songs on every wind! From *thy* bright shore
No lovelier vision floated round his head—
Thou wert for nobler dead!
He heard the bounding steps which round him fell,
And sigh'd to bid the festal sun farewell!

The slave, whose very tears
Were a forbidden luxury, and whose breast
Kept the mute woes and burning thoughts of years,
As embers in a burial-urn compress'd;
He might not be thy guest!
No gentle breathings from thy distant sky
Came o'er *his* path, and whisper'd "Liberty!"

Calm, on its leaf-strewn bier,
Unlike a gift of Nature to Decay,
Too rose-like still, too beautiful, too dear,
The child at rest before the mother lay,
E'en so to pass away,
With its bright smile!—Elysium! what wert *thou*
To her, who wept o'er that young slumb'rer's brow?

Thou hadst no home, green land!
For the fair creature from her bosom gone,
With life's fresh flowers just opening in its hand,
And all the lovely thoughts and dreams unknown
Which, in its clear eye, shone
Like spring's first wakening! but that light was past—
Where went the dewdrop swept before the blast?

Not where *thy* soft winds play'd,
Not where thy waters lay in glassy sleep!
Fade with thy bowers, thou Land of Visions, fade!
From thee no voice came o'er the gloomy deep,
And bade man cease to weep!

Fade, with the amaranth plain, the myrtle grove,
Which could not yield one hope to sorrowing love! *

* The form of this poem was a good deal altered by Mrs Hemans some years after its first publication, and, though done so perhaps to advantage, one verse was omitted. As originally written, the two following stanzas concluded the piece:—

For the most loved are they
Of whom Fame speaks not with her clarion voice,
In regal halls! the shades o'erhang their way.
The vale, with its deep fountains, is their choice,
And gentle hearts rejoice
Around their steps; till silently they die,
As a stream shrinks from summer's burning eye.

And the world knows not then,
Not then, nor ever, what pure thoughts are fled!
Yet these are they, who on the souls of men
Come back, when night her folding veil hath spread,
The long-remember'd dead!
But not with *thee* might aught save glory dwell—
Fade, fade away, thou shore of asphodel!

THE FUNERAL GENIUS;

AN ANCIENT STATUE.

"Debout, couronné de fleurs, les bras élevés et posés sur sa tête, et le dos appuyé contre un pin, ce génie semble exprimer par son attitude le repos des morts. Les bas-reliefs des tombeaux offrent souvent des figures semblables."—VISCONTI, *Description des Antiques du Musée Royal.*

THOU shouldst be look'd on when the starlight falls
Through the blue stillness of the summer-air,
Not by the torch-fire wavering on the walls—
It hath too fitful and too wild a glare!
And thou!—thy rest, the soft, the lovely, seems
To ask light steps, that will not break its dreams.

Flowers are upon thy brow; for so the dead
Were crown'd of old, with pale spring flowers like these:
Sleep on thine eye hath sunk; yet softly shed,
As from the wing of some faint southern breeze:
And the pine-boughs o'ershadow thee with gloom
Which of the grove seems breathing—not the tomb.

They fear'd not death, whose calm and gracious thought
Of the last hour, hath settled thus in thee!

They who thy wreath of pallid roses wrought,
And laid thy head against the forest tree,
As that of one, by music's dreamy close,
On the wood-violets lull'd to deep repose.

They fear'd not death!—yet who shall say his touch
Thus lightly falls on gentle things and fair?
Doth he bestow, or will he leave so much
Of tender beauty as thy features wear?
Thou sleeper of the bower! on whose young eyes
So still a night, a night of summer, lies!

Had they seen aught like thee?—Did some fair boy
Thus, with his graceful hair, before them rest?
—His graceful hair, no more to wave in joy,
But drooping, as with heavy dews oppress'd:
And his eye veil'd so softly by its fringe,
And his lip faded to the white-rose tinge?

Oh! happy, if to them the one dread hour
Made known its lessons from a brow like thine!
If all their knowledge of the spoiler's power
Came by a look so tranquilly divine!
—Let him, who *thus* hath seen the lovely part,
Hold well that image to his thoughtful heart!

But thou, fair slumberer! was there less of woe,
Or love, or terror, in the days of old,
That men pour'd out their gladdening spirit's flow,
Like sunshine, on the desolate and cold,
And gave thy semblance to the shadowy king,
Who for deep souls had then a deeper sting?

In the dark bosom of the earth they laid
Far more than we—for loftier faith is ours!
Their gems were lost in ashes—yet they made
The grave a place of beauty and of flowers,
With fragrant wreaths, and summer boughs array'd,
And lovely sculpture gleaming through the shade.

Is it for *us* a darker gloom to shed
O'er its dim precincts?—do we not intrust
But for a time, its chambers with our dead,
And strew immortal seed upon the dust?
—Why should *we* dwell on that which lies beneath,
When living light hath touch'd the brow of death?

THE TOMBS OF PLATÆA.

FROM A PAINTING BY WILLIAMS.

And there they sleep!—the men who stood
In arms before th' exulting sun,
And bathed their spears in Persian blood,
And taught the earth how freedom might be won.

They sleep!—th' Olympic wreaths are dead,
Th' Athenian lyres are hush'd and gone;
The Dorian voice of song is fled—
Slumber, ye mighty! slumber deeply on.

They sleep, and seems not all around
As hallow'd unto glory's tomb?

Silence is on the battle ground,
The heavens are loaded with a breathless gloom.

And stars are watching on their height,
But dimly seen through mist and cloud,
And still and solemn is the light
Which folds the plain, as with a glimmering shroud.

And thou, pale night-queen! here thy beams
Are not as those the shepherd loves,
Nor look they down on shining streams,
By Naiads haunted in their laurel groves:

Thou seest no pastoral hamlet sleep,
In shadowy quiet, 'midst its vines
No temple gleaming from the steep,
'Midst the grey olives, or the mountain pines:

But o'er a dim and boundless waste,
Thy rays, e'en like a tomb-lamp's, brood,
Where man's departed steps are traced
But by his dust, amidst the solitude.

And be it thus!—What slave shall tread
O'er freedom's ancient battle-plains?
Let deserts wrap the glorious dead,
When their bright Land sits weeping o'er her chains:

Here, where the Persian clarion rung,
And where the Spartan sword flash'd high,
And where the pæan strains were sung,
From year to year swell'd on by liberty!

Here should no voice, no sound, be heard,
Until the bonds of Greece be riven,
Save of the leader's charging word,
Or the shrill trumpet, pealing up through heaven!

Rest in your silent homes, ye brave!
No vines festoon your lonely tree!*
No harvest o'er your war-field wave,
Till rushing winds proclaim—the land is free!

THE VIEW FROM CASTRI.

FROM A PAINTING BY WILLIAMS.

THERE have been bright and glorious pageants here,
Where now grey stones and moss-grown columns lie;
There have been words, which earth grew pale to hear,
Breath'd from the cavern's misty chambers nigh:
There have been voices, through the sunny sky,
And the pine-woods, their choral hymn-notes sending,
And reeds and lyres, their Dorian melody,
With incense-clouds around the temple blending,
And throngs with laurel-boughs, before the altar bending.

* A single tree appears in Mr Williams's impressive picture.

There have been treasures of the seas and isles
Brought to the day-god's now-forsaken throne;
Thunders have peal'd along the rock-defiles,
When the far-echoing battle-horn made known
That foes were on their way!—the deep-wind's moan
Hath chill'd th' invader's heart with secret fear,
And from the Sybil-grottoes, wild and lone,
Storms have gone forth, which, in their fierce career,
From his bold hand have struck the banner and the spear.

The shrine hath sunk!—but thou unchanged art there!
Mount of the voice and vision, robed with dreams!
Unchanged, and rushing through the radiant air,
With thy dark waving pines, and flashing streams,
And all thy founts of song! their bright course teems
With inspiration yet; and each dim haze,
Or golden cloud which floats around thee, seems
As with its mantle veiling from our gaze
The mysteries of the past, the gods of elder days!

Away, vain phantasies!—doth less of power
Dwell round thy summit, or thy cliffs invest,
Though in deep stillness now, the ruin's flower
Wave o'er the pillars mouldering on thy breast?
—Lift through the free blue heavens thine arrowy crest!

Let the great rocks their solitude regain!
No Delphian lyres now break thy noontide rest
With their full chords:—but silent be the strain!
Thou hast a mightier voice to speak th' Eternal's reign!*

THE FESTAL HOUR.

When are the lessons given
That shake the startled earth? When wakes the foe
While the friend sleeps! When falls the traitor's blow?
When are proud sceptres riven,
High hopes o'erthrown?—It is when lands rejoice,
When cities blaze and lift th' exulting voice,
And wave their banners to the kindling heaven!

Fear ye the festal hour!
When mirth o'erflows, then tremble!—'Twas a night
Of gorgeous revel, wreaths, and dance, and light,
When through the regal bower
The trumpet peal'd, ere yet the song was done,
And there were shrieks in golden Babylon,
And trampling armies, ruthless in their power.

The marble shrines were crown'd:
Young voices, through the blue Athenian sky,

* This, with the preceding, and several of the following pieces, first appeared in the *Edinburgh Magazine*.

And Dorian reeds, made summer-melody,
And censers waved around;
And lyres were strung and bright libations pour'd!
When, through the streets, flash'd out th' avenging sword,
Fearless and free, the sword with myrtles bound! *

Through Rome a triumph pass'd.
Rich in her sun-god's mantling beams went by
That long array of glorious pageantry,
With shout and trumpet-blast.
An empire's gems their starry splendour shed
O'er the proud march; a king in chains was led;
A stately victor, crown'd and robed, came last. †

And many a Dryad's bower
Had lent the laurels which, in waving play,
Stirr'd the warm air, and glisten'd round his way,
As a quick-flashing shower.
—O'er his own porch, meantime, the cypress hung,
Through his fair halls a cry of anguish rung—
Woe for the dead!—the father's broken flower!

A sound of lyre and song,
In the still night, went floating o'er the Nile,
Whose waves, by many an old mysterious pile,
Swept with that voice along;

* The sword of Harmodius.

† Paulus Æmilius, one of whose sons died a few days before, and another shortly after, his triumph on the conquest of Macedon, when Perseus, king of that country, was led in chains.

And lamps were shining o'er the red wine's foam
Where a chief revell'd in a monarch's dome,
And fresh rose-garlands deck'd a glittering throng.

'Twas Antony that bade
The joyous chords ring out!—but strains arose
Of wilder omen at the banquet's close!
Sounds, by no mortal made,*
Shook Alexandria through her streets that night,
And pass'd—and with another sunset's light,
The kingly Roman on his bier was laid.

Bright 'midst its vineyards lay
The fair Campanian city,† with its towers
And temples gleaming through dark olive-bowers,
Clear in the golden day;
Joy was around it as the glowing sky,
And crowds had fill'd its halls of revelry,
And all the sunny air was music's way.

A cloud came o'er the face
Of Italy's rich heaven!—its crystal blue
Was changed, and deepen'd to a wrathful hue
Of night, o'ershadowing space,
As with the wings of death!—in all his power
Vesuvius woke, and hurl'd the burning shower,
And who could tell the buried city's place?

* See the description given by Plutarch, in his life of Antony, of the supernatural sounds heard in the streets of Alexandria, the night before Antony's death.

† Herculaneum, of which it is related, that all the inhabitants were assembled in the theatres, when the shower of ashes which covered the city descended.

Such things have been of yore,
In the gay regions where the citrons blow,
And purple summers all their sleepy glow
On the grape-clusters pour;
And where the palms to spicy winds are waving,
Along clear seas of melting sapphire, laving,
As with a flow of light, their southern shore.

Turn we to other climes!—
Far in the Druid-Isle a feast was spread,
'Midst the rock-altars of the warrior dead:*
And ancient battle-rhymes
Were chanted to the harp; and yellow mead
Went flowing round, and tales of martial deed,
And lofty songs of Britain's elder time;

But, ere the giant-fane
Cast its broad shadows on the robe of even,
Hush'd were the bards, and in the face of heaven,
O'er that old burial-plain
Flash'd the keen Saxon dagger!—Blood was streaming
Where late the mead-cup to the sun was gleaming,
And Britain's hearths were heap'd that night in vain—

For they return'd no more!
They that went forth at morn, with reckless heart,

* Stonehenge, said by some traditions to have been erected to the memory of Ambrosius, an early British king; and by others mentioned as a monumental record of the massacre of British chiefs here alluded to.

In that fierce banquet's mirth to bear their part;
And, on the rushy floor,
And the bright spears and bucklers of the walls,
The high wood-fires were blazing in their halls;
But not for them—they slept—their feast was o'er!

Fear ye the festal hour!
Ay, tremble when the cup of joy o'erflows!
Tame down the swelling heart!—the bridal rose,
And the rich myrtle's flower
Have veil'd the sword!—Red wines have sparkled fast
From venom'd goblets, and soft breezes pass'd,
With fatal perfume, through the revel's bower.

Twine the young glowing wreath!
But pour not all your spirit in the song,
Which through the sky's deep azure floats along,
Like summer's quickening breath!
The ground is hollow in the path of mirth:
Oh! far too daring seems the joy of earth,
So darkly press'd and girdled in by death!

SONG OF THE BATTLE OF MORGARTEN.

["In the year 1315, Switzerland was invaded by Duke Leopold of Austria, with a formidable army. It is well attested that this prince repeatedly declared he 'would trample the audacious rustics under his feet;' and that he had procured a large stock of cordage, for the purpose of binding their chiefs, and putting them to death.

"The 15th October, 1315, dawned. The sun darted its first rays on the shields and armour of the advancing host; and this being the first army ever known to have attempted the frontiers of the cantons, the Swiss viewed its long line with various emotions. Montfort de Tettnang led the cavalry into the narrow pass, and soon filled the whole space between the mountain (Mount Sattel) and the lake. The fifty men on the eminence (above Morgarten) raised a sudden shout, and rolled down heaps of rocks and stones among the crowded ranks. The confederates on the mountain, perceiving the impression made by this attack, rushed down in close array, and fell upon the flank of the disordered column. With massy clubs they dashed in pieces the armour of the enemy, and dealt their blows and thrusts with long pikes. The narrowness of the defile admitted of no evolutions, and a slight frost having injured the road, the horses were impeded in all their motions; many leaped into the lake; all were startled; and at last the whole

column gave way, and fell suddenly back on the infantry; and these last, as the nature of the country did not allow them to open their files, were run over by the fugitives, and many of them trampled to death. A general rout ensued, and Duke Leopold was, with much difficulty, rescued by a peasant, who led him to Winterthur, where the historian of the times saw him arrive in the evening, pale, sullen, and dismayed." — PLANTA'S *History of the Helvetic Confederacy.*

THE wine-month * shone in its golden prime,
And the red grapes clustering hung,
But a deeper sound, through the Switzer's clime,
Than the vintage-music, rung.
A sound, through vaulted cave,
A sound, through echoing glen,
Like the hollow swell of a rushing wave;
—'Twas the tread of steel-girt men.

And a trumpet, pealing wild and far,
'Midst the ancient rocks was blown,
Till the Alps replied to that voice of war
With a thousand of their own.
And through the forest-glooms
Flash'd helmets to the day,
And the winds were tossing knightly plumes,
Like the larch-boughs in their play.

In Hasli's † wilds there was gleaming steel,
As the host of the Austrian pass'd;

* *Wine-month*, the German name for October.

† Hasli, a wild district in the canton of Berne.

And the Schreckhorn's* rocks, with a savage peal,
Made mirth of his clarion's blast.
Up 'midst the Righi† snows
The stormy march was heard,
With the charger's tramp, whence fire-sparks rose,
And the leader's gathering word.

But a band, the noblest band of all,
Through the rude Morgarten strait,
With blazon'd streamers, and lances tall,
Moved onwards in princely state.
They came with heavy chains,
For the race despised so long—
But amidst his Alp-domains,
The herdsman's arm is strong!

The sun was reddening the clouds of morn
When they enter'd the rock-defile,
And shrill as a joyous hunter's horn
Their bugles rung the while.
But on the misty height,
Where the mountain-people stood,
There was stillness, as of night,
When storms at distance brood.

There was stillness, as of deep dead night,
And a pause—but not of fear,
While the Switzers gazed on the gathering might
Of the hostile shield and spear.

* Schreckhorn, the *peak of terror*, a mountain in the canton of Berne.

† Righi, a mountain in the canton of Schwytz.

On wound those columns bright
Between the lake and wood,
But they look'd not to the misty height
Where the mountain-people stood.

The pass was fill'd with their serried power,
All helm'd and mail-array'd,
And their steps had sounds like a thunder-shower
In the rustling forest-shade.
There were prince and crested knight,
Hemm'd in by cliff and flood,
When a shout arose from the misty height
Where the mountain-people stood.

And the mighty rocks came bounding down,
Their startled foes among,
With a joyous whirl from the summit thrown—
—Oh! the herdsman's arm is strong!
They came like lauwine* hurl'd
From Alp to Alp in play,
When the echoes shout through the snowy world
And the pines are borne away.

The fir-woods crash'd on the mountain-side,
And the Switzers rush'd from high,
With a sudden charge, on the flower and pride
Of the Austrian chivalry:
Like hunters of the deer,
They storm'd the narrow dell,

* *Lauwine*, the Swiss name for the avalanche.

And first in the shock, with Uri's spear,
Was the arm of William Tell.*

There was tumult in the crowded strait,
And a cry of wild dismay,
And many a warrior met his fate
From a peasant's hand that day!
And the empire's banner then
From its place of waving free,
Went down before the shepherd-men,
The men of the Forest-sea†.

With their pikes and massy clubs they brake
The cuirass and the shield,
And the war-horse dash'd to the reddening lake
From the reapers of the field!
The field—but not of sheaves—
Proud crests and pennons lay,
Strewn o'er it thick as the birch-wood leaves,
In the autumn tempest's way.

Oh! the sun in heaven fierce havoc view'd,
When the Austrian turn'd to fly,
And the brave, in the trampling multitude,
Had a fearful death to die!
And the leader of the war
At eve unhelm'd was seen,

* William Tell's name is particularly mentioned amongst the confederates at Morgarten.

† *Forest-sea*, the lake of the four cantons is also so called.

With a hurrying step on the wilds afar,
And a pale and troubled mien.

But the sons of the land which the freeman tills,
Went back from the battle-toil,
To their cabin homes 'midst the deep green hills,
All burden'd with royal spoil.
There were songs and festal fires
On the soaring Alps that night,
When children sprung to greet their sires
From the wild Morgarten fight.

SEBASTIAN OF PORTUGAL.

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT.

Dram. Pers.

SEBASTIAN. ZAMOR, *a young Arab.*
GONZALEZ *his friend.* SYLVEIRA.

SCENE I.

The sea-shore near Lisbon.

SEBASTIAN—GONZALEZ—ZAMOR.

Seb. With what young life and fragrance in its breath
My native air salutes me! from the groves
Of citron, and the mountains of the vine,
And thy majestic tide thus foaming on
In power and freedom o'er its golden sands,
Fair stream, my Tajo! youth, with all its glow
And pride of feeling, through my soul and frame
Again seems rushing, as these noble waves
Past their bright shores flow joyously. Sweet land,
My own, my Fathers' land, of sunny skies
And orange bowers!—Oh! is it not a dream
That thus I tread thy soil? Or do I wake

From a dark dream but now! Gonzalez, say,
Doth it not bring the flush of early life
Back on th' awakening spirit, thus to gaze
On the far-sweeping river, and the shades
Which in their undulating motion speak
Of gentle winds amidst bright waters born,
After the fiery skies and dark-red sands
Of the lone desert? Time and toil must needs
Have changed *our* mien; but this, our blessed land,
Hath gained but richer beauty since we bade
Her glowing shores farewell. Seems it not thus?
Thy brow is clouded.—

Gon. To mine eye the scene
Wears, amidst all its quiet loveliness,
A hue of desolation, and the calm,
The solitude and silence which pervade
Earth, air, and ocean, seem belonging less
To peace than sadness! We have proudly stood
Even on this shore, beside the Atlantic wave,
When it hath look'd not thus.

Seb. Ay, now thy soul
Is in the past! Oh no, it look'd not thus
When the morn smiled upon our thousand sails,
And the winds blew for Afric! How that hour,
With all its hues of glory, seems to burst
Again upon my vision! I behold
The stately barks, the arming, the array,
The crests, the banners of my chivalry
Swayed by the sea-breeze till their motion show'd
Like joyous life! How the proud billows foam'd!
And the oars flashed, like lightnings of the deep,
And the tall spears went glancing to the sun,

And scattering round quick rays, as if to guide
The valiant unto fame! Ay, the blue heaven
Seemed for that noble scene a canopy
Scarce too majestic, while it rung afar
To peals of warlike sound! My gallant bands!
Where are you now?

Gon. Bid the wide desert tell
Where sleep its dead! To mightier hosts than them
Hath it lent graves ere now; and on its breast
Is room for nations yet!

Seb. It cannot be
That all have perished! Many a noble man,
Made captive on that war-field, may have burst
His bonds like ours. Cloud not this fleeting hour,
Which to my soul is as the fountain's draught
To the parched lip of fever, with a thought
So darkly sad!

Gon. Oh never, never cast
That deep remembrance from you! When once more
Your place is 'midst earth's rulers, let it dwell
Around you, as the shadow of your throne,
Wherein the land may rest. My king, this hour
(Solemn as that which to the voyager's eye,
In far and dim perspective, doth unfold
A new and boundless world) may haply be
The last in which the courage and the power
Of truth's high voice may reach you. Who may stand
As man to man, as friend to friend, before
The ancestral throne of monarchs? Or, perchance,
Toils, such as tame the loftiest to endurance,
Henceforth may wait us here! But howsoe'er

This be, the lessons now from sufferings past
Befit all time, all change. Oh! by the blood,
The free, the generous blood of Portugal,
Shed on the sands of Afric,—by the names
Which, with their centuries of high renown,
There died, extinct for ever,—let not those
Who stood in hope and glory at our side
Here, on this very sea-beach, whence they pass'd
To fall, and leave no trophy,—let them not
Be soon, be e'er forgotten! for their fate
Bears a deep warning in its awfulness,
Whence power might well learn wisdom!

Seb. Think'st thou, then,
That years of sufferance and captivity,
Such as have bow'd down eagle hearts ere now,
And made high energies their spoil, have pass'd
So lightly o'er my spirit? It is not thus!
The things thou would'st recall are not of those
To be forgotten! But my heart hath still
A sense, a bounding pulse for hope and joy,
And it is joy which whispers in the breeze
Sent from my own free mountains. Brave Gonzalez!
Thou art one to make thy fearless heart a shield
Unto thy friend, in the dark stormy hour
When knightly crests are trampled, and proud helms
Cleft, and strong breastplates shiver'd. Thou art one
To infuse the soul of gallant fortitude
Into the captive's bosom, and beguile
The long slow march beneath the burning noon
With lofty patience; but for those quick bursts,
Those buoyant efforts of the soul to cast

Her weight of care to earth, those brief delights
Whose source is in a sunbeam, or a sound
Which stirs the blood, or a young breeze, whose wing
Wanders in chainless joy; for things like these
Thou hast no sympathies!—And thou, my Zamor,
Art wrapt in thought! I welcome thee to this,
The kingdom of my fathers. Is it not
A goodly heritage?

Zam. The land is fair:
But he, the archer of the wilderness,
Beholdeth not the palms beneath whose shade
His tents are scatter'd, and his camels rest;
And therefore is he sad!

Seb. Thou must not pine
With that sick yearning of the impatient heart,
Which makes the exile's life one fever'd dream
Of skies, and hills, and voices far away,
And faces wearing the familiar hues
Lent by his native sunbeams. I have known
Too much of this, and would not see another
Thus daily die. If it be so with thee,
My gentle Zamor, speak. Behold, our bark
Yet, with her white sails catching sunset's glow,
Lies within signal reach. If it be thus,
Then fare thee well—farewell, thou brave, and true,
And generous friend! How often is our path
Cross'd by some being whose bright spirit sheds
A passing gladness o'er it, but whose course
Leads down another current, never more
To blend with ours! Yet far within our souls,
Amidst the rushing of the busy world,
Dwells many a secret thought, which lingers yet

Around that image. And e'en so, kind Zamor,
Shalt thou be long remembered!

Zam. By the fame
Of my brave sire, whose deeds the warrior tribes
Tell round the desert's watchfire, at the hour
Of silence, and of coolness, and of stars,
I will not leave thee! 'Twas in such an hour
The dreams of rest were on me, and I lay
Shrouded in slumber's mantle, as within
The chambers of the dead. Who saved me then,
When the pard, soundless as the midnight, stole
Soft on the sleeper? Whose keen dart transfix'd
The monarch of the solitudes? I woke,
And saw *thy* javelin crimson'd with his blood,
Thou, my deliverer! and my heart e'en then
Call'd thee its brother.

Seb. For that gift of life
With one of tenfold price, even freedom's self,
Thou hast repaid me well.

Zam. Then bid me not
Forsake thee! Though my father's tents may rise
At times upon my spirit, yet my home
Shall be amidst thy mountains, Prince, and thou
Shalt be my chief, until I see thee robed
With all thy power. When thou canst need no more
Thine Arab's faithful heart and vigorous arm,
From the green regions of the setting sun
Then shall the wanderer turn his steps, and seek
His orient wilds again.

Seb. Be near me still,
And ever, O my warrior! I shall stand
Again amidst my hosts a mail-clad king,

Begirt with spears and banners, and the pomp
And the proud sounds of battle. Be thy place
Then at my side. When doth a monarch cease
To need true hearts, bold hands? Not in the field
Of arms, nor on the throne of power, nor yet
The couch of sleep. Be our friend, we will not part.
Gon. Be all thy friends then faithful, for e'en yet
They may be fiercely tried.
Seb. I doubt them not.
Even now my heart beats high to meet their welcome.
Let us away!
Gon. Yet hear once more, my liege:
The humblest pilgrim, from his distant shrine
Returning, finds not e'en his peasant home
Unchanged amidst its vineyards. Some loved face,
Which made the sun-light of his lowly board,
Is touch'd by sickness; some familiar voice
Greets him no more; and shall not fate and time
Have done their work, since last we parted hence,
Upon an empire? Ay, within those years,
Hearts from their ancient worship have fall'n off
And bow'd before new stars: high names have sunk
From their supremacy of place, and others
Gone forth, and made themselves the mighty sounds
At which thrones tremble. Oh! be slow to trust
E'en those to whom your smiles were wont to seem
As light is unto flowers. Search well the depths
Of bosoms in whose keeping you would shrine
The secret of your state. Storms pass not by
Leaving earth's face unchanged.

Seb. Whence didst thou learn
The cold distrust which casts so deep a shadow
O'er a most noble nature?
Gon. Life hath been
My stern and only teacher. I have known
Vicissitudes in all things, but the most
In human hearts. Oh! yet awhile tame down
That royal spirit, till the hour be come
When it may burst its bondage! On thy brow
The suns of burning climes have set their seal,
And toil, and years, and perils, have not pass'd
O'er the bright aspect, and the ardent eye,
As doth a breeze of summer. Be that change
The mask beneath whose shelter thou may'st read
Men's thoughts, and veil thine own.
Seb. Am I thus changed
From all I was? And yet it needs must be,
Since e'en my soul hath caught another hue
From its long sufferings. Did I not array
The gallant flower of Lusian chivalry,
And lead the mighty of the land, to pour
Destruction on the Moslem? I return,
And as a fearless and a trusted friend,
Bring, from the realms of my captivity,
An Arab of the desert!—But the sun
Hath sunk below th' Atlantic. Let us hence—
Gonzalez, fear me not. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.

A Street in Lisbon illuminated.

Many Citizens.

1*st Cit.* In sooth our city wears a goodly mien
With her far-blazing fanes, and festive lamps
Shining from all her marble palaces,
Countless as heaven's fair stars. The humblest lattice
Sends forth its radiance. How the sparkling waves
Fling back the light!
2*d Cit.* Ay, 'tis a gallant show;
And one which serves, like others, to conceal
Things which must not be told.
3*d Cit.* What wouldst thou say?
2*d Cit.* That which may scarce, in perilous times like these,
Be said with safety. Hast thou look'd within
Those stately palaces? Were they but peopled
With the high race of warlike nobles, once
Their princely lords, think'st thou, good friend, that now
They would be glittering with this hollow pomp,
To greet a conqueror's entrance?
3*d Cit.* Thou say'st well.
None but a land forsaken of its chiefs
Had been so lost and won.
4*th Cit.* The lot is cast;
We have but to yield. Hush! for some strangers come:
Now friends, beware.

1st Cit. Did the king pass this way
At morning, with his train?
2d Cit. Ay: saw you not
The long and rich procession?
[SEBAST. *enters with* GONZAL. *and* ZAMOR.
Seb. to Gon. This should be
The night of some high festival. E'en thus
My royal city to the skies sent up
From her illumined fanes and towers a voice
Of gladness, welcoming our first return
From Afric's coast. Speak thou, Gonzalez, ask
The cause of this rejoicing. To my heart
Deep feelings rush, so mingled and so fast,
My voice perchance might tremble.
Gon. Citizen,
What festal night is this, that all your streets
Are throng'd and glittering thus?
1st Cit. Hast thou not heard
Of the king's entry, in triumphal pomp,
This very morn?
Gon. The king! triumphal pomp!
Thy words are dark.
Seb. Speak yet again: mine ears
Ring with strange sounds. Again!
1st Cit. I said, the king,
Philip of Spain, and now of Portugal,
This morning enter'd with a conqueror's train
Our city's royal palace: and for this
We hold our festival.
Seb. (*in a low voice.*) Thou said'st—the king!
His name?—I heard it not.
1st Cit. Philip of Spain.

Seb. Philip of Spain! We slumber, till aroused
By th' earthquake's bursting shock. Hath there not fall'n
A sudden darkness? All things seem to float
Obscurely round me. Now 'tis past. The streets
Are blazing with strange fire. Go, quench those lamps;
They glare upon me till my very brain
Grows dizzy, and doth whirl. How dare ye thus
Light up your shrines for *him?*
Gon. Away, away!
This is no time, no scene—
Seb. Philip of Spain!
How name ye this fair land? Why—is it not
The free, the chivalrous Portugal? the land
By the proud ransom of heroic blood
Won from the Moor of old? Did that red stream
Sink to the earth, and leave no fiery current
In the veins of noble men, that so its tide,
Full swelling at the sound of hostile steps,
Might be a kingdom's barrier?
2d Cit. That high blood
Which should have been our strength, profusely shed
By the rash King Sebastian, bathed the plains
Of fatal Alcazar. Our monarch's guilt
Hath brought this ruin down.
Seb. Must this be heard,
And borne, and unchastised. Man, darest thou stand
Before me face to face, and thus arraign
Thy sovereign?

Zam. (*aside to Seb.*) Shall I lift the sword, my Prince,
Against thy foes?
Gon. Be still—or all is lost.
2*d Cit.* I dare speak that which all men think and know.
'Tis to Sebastian, and his waste of life,
And power, and treasure, that we owe these bonds.
3*d Cit.* Talk not of bonds. May our new monarch rule
The weary land in peace! But who art thou?
Whence com'st thou, haughty stranger, that these things,
Known to all nations, should be new to thee?
Seb. (*wildly.*) I come from regions where the cities lie
In ruins, not in chains.
[*Exit with* GONZAL. *and* ZAMOR.
2*d Cit.* He wears the mien
Of one that hath commanded; yet his looks
And words were strangely wild.
1*st Cit.* Mark'd you his fierce
And haughty gesture, and the flash that broke
From his dark eye, when King Sebastian's name
Became our theme?
2*d Cit.* Trust me, there's more in this
Than may be lightly said. These are no times
To breathe men's thoughts i' th' open face of heaven
And ear of multitudes. They that would speak
Of monarchs and their deeds, should keep within
Their quiet homes. Come, let us hence, and then
We'll commune of this stranger.

The Portico of a Palace.

SEBASTIAN.—GONZALEZ.—ZAMOR.

Seb. Withstand me not! I tell thee that my soul,
With all its passionate energies, is roused
Unto that fearful strength which *must* have way
E'en like the elements, in their hour of might
And mastery o'er creation.
Gon. But they *wait*
That hour in silence. O! be calm awhile,
Thine is not come. My king—
Seb. I am no king,
While in the very palace of my sires,
Ay, where mine eyes first drank the glorious light,
Where my soul's thrilling echoes first awoke
To the high sound of earth's immortal names,
Th' usurper lives and reigns. I am no king
Until I cast him thence.
Zam. Shall not thy voice
Be as a trumpet to the awak'ning land?
Will not the bright swords flash like sun-bursts forth,
When the brave hear their chief?
Gon. Peace, Zamor, peace!
Child of the desert, what hast thou to do
With the calm hour of counsel?
—Monarch, pause,
A kingdom's destiny should not be th' sport
Of passion's reckless winds. There is a time
When men, in very weariness of heart

And careless desolation, tamed to yield
By misery, strong as death, will lay their souls
E'en at the conqueror's feet, as nature sinks,
After long torture, into cold, and dull,
And heavy sleep. But comes there not an hour
Of fierce atonement? Ay, the slumberer wakes
With gather'd strength and vengeance; and the sense
And the remembrance of his agonies
Are in themselves a power, whose fearful path
Is like the path of ocean, when the heavens
Take off its interdict. Wait then the hour
Of that high impulse.

Seb. Is it not the sun
Whose radiant bursting through the embattled clouds
Doth make it morn? The hour of which thou speak'st,
Itself, with all its glory, is the work
Of some commanding nature, which doth bid
The sullen shades disperse. Away!—e'en now
The land's high hearts, the fearless and the true,
Shall know they have a leader. Is not this
The mansion of mine own, mine earliest, friend
Sylveira?

Gon. Ay, its glittering lamps too well
Illume the stately vestibule to leave
Our sight a moment's doubt. He ever loved
Such pageantries.

Seb *His* dwelling thus adorn'd
On such a night! Yet will I seek him here.
He must be faithful, and to him the first
My tale shall be reveal'd. A sudden chill
Falls on my heart; and yet I will not wrong

My friend with dull suspicion. He hath been
Link'd all too closely with mine inmost soul.
And what have I to lose?
Gon. Is their blood nought
Who without hope will follow where thou lead'st
E'en unto death?
Seb. Was that a brave man's voice?
Warrior, and friend! how long then hast th
learn'd
To hold thy blood thus dear?
Gon. Of *mine*, mine own
Think'st thou I spoke? When all is shed for th
Thou'lt know me better.
Seb. (*entering the palace.*) For a while farewe
[*E*
Gon. Thus princes lead men's hearts. Co
follow me,
And if a home is left me still, brave Zamor,
There will I bid thee welcome. [*Exeu*

Scene IV.

A Hall within the Palace.

Sebastian.—Sylveira.

Sylv. Whence art thou, stranger?—what woul
thou with me?
There is a fiery wildness in thy mien,
Startling and almost fearful.
Seb. From the stern,
And vast, and desolate wilderness, whose lord

Is the fierce lion, and whose gentlest wind
Breathes of the tomb, and whose dark children make
The bow and spear their law, men bear not back
That smilingness of aspect, wont to mask
The secrets of their spirits 'midst the stir
Of courts and cities. I have look'd on scenes
Boundless, and strange, and terrible ; I have known
Sufferings which are not in the shadowy scope
Of wild imagination ; and these things
Have stamp'd me with their impress. Man of peace,
Thou look'st on one familiar with the extremes
Of grandeur and of misery.

Sylv. Stranger, speak
Thy name and purpose briefly, for the time
Ill suits these mysteries. I must hence ; to-night
I feast the lords of Spain.

Seb. Is that a task
For King Sebastian's friend ?

Sylv. Sebastian's friend !
That name hath lost its meaning. Will the dead
Rise from their silent dwellings, to upbraid
The living for their mirth. The grave sets bounds
Unto all human friendship.

Seb. On the plain
Of Alcazar full many a stately flower,
The pride and crown of some high house, was laid
Low in the dust of Afric ; but of these
Sebastian was not one.

Sylv. I am not skill'd
To deal with men of mystery. Take, then, off
The strange dark scrutiny of thine eye from mine.
What mean'st thou ?—Speak !

Seb. Sebastian died not there.
I read no joy in that cold doubting mien.
Is not thy name Sylveira?
Sylv. Ay.
Seb. Why, then,
Be glad! I tell thee that Sebastian lives!
Think thou on this—he lives! Should he return
—For he may yet return—and find the friend
In whom he trusted with such perfect trust
As should be heaven's alone—mark'st thou my words?
—Should he then find this man, not girt and arm'd,
And watching o'er the heritage of his lord,
But, reckless of high fame and loyal faith,
Holding luxurious revels with his foes,
How wouldst thou meet his glance?
Sylv. As I do thine,
Keen though it be, and proud.
Seb. Why, thou dost quail
Before it, even as if the burning eye
Of the broad sun pursued thy shrinking soul
Through all its depths.
Sylv. Away! he died not there!
He *should* have died there, with the chivalry
And strength and honour of his kingdom, lost
By his impetuous rashness.
Seb. This from *thee?*
Who hath given power to falsehood, that one gaze
At its unmask'd and withering mien, should blight
High souls at once? I wake. And this from thee?
There are, whose eyes discern the secret springs
Which lie beneath the desert, and the gold
And gems within earth's caverns, far below

The everlasting hills: but who hath dared
To dream that heaven's most awful attribute
Invested his mortality, and to boast
That through its inmost folds his glance could read
One heart, one human heart? Why, then, to love
And trust is but to lend a traitor arms
Of keenest temper and unerring aim,
Wherewith to pierce our souls. But thou, beware!
Sebastian lives!

Sylv. If it be so, and thou
Art of his followers still, then bid him seek
Far in the wilds, which gave one sepulchre
To his proud hosts, a kingdom and a home,
For none is left him here.

Seb. This is to live
An age of wisdom in an hour! The man
Whose empire, as in scorn, o'erpass'd the bounds
E'en of the infinite deep; whose orient realms
Lay bright beneath the morning, while the clouds
Were brooding in their sunset mantle still,
O'er his majestic regions of the west;
This heir of far dominion shall return,
And, in the very city of his birth,
Shall find no home! Ay, I *will* tell him this,
And he will answer that the tale is false,
False as a traitor's hollow words of love;
And that the stately dwelling, in whose halls
We commune now—a friend's, a monarch's gift,
Unto the chosen of his heart, Sylveira,
Should yield him still a welcome.

Sylv. Fare thee well!
I may not pause to hear thee, for thy words

Are full of danger, and of snares, perchance
Laid by some treach'rous foe. But all in vain.
I mock thy wiles to scorn.
Seb. Ha! ha! The snake
Doth pride himself in his distorted cunning,
Deeming it wisdom. Nay, thou go'st not thus.
My heart is bursting, and I *will* be heard.
What! know'st thou not my spirit was born to hold
Dominion over thine? Thou shalt not cast
Those bonds thus lightly from thee. Stand thou there,
And tremble in the presence of thy lord!
Sylv. This is all madness.
Seb. Madness! no—I say
'Tis Reason starting from her sleep, to feel,
And see, and know, in all their cold distinctness,
Things which come o'er her, as a sense of pain
O' th' sudden wakes the dreamer. Stay thee yet:
Be still. Thou 'rt used to smile and to obey;
Ay, and to weep. I have seen thy tears flow fast,
As from the fullness of a heart o'ercharged
With loyal love. Oh! never, never more
Let tears or smiles be trusted! When thy king
Went forth on his disastrous enterprise,
Upon thy bed of sickness thou wast laid,
And he stood o'er thee with the look of one
Who leaves a dying brother, and his eyes
Were fill'd with tears like thine. No! *not* like thine:
His bosom knew no falsehood, and he deem'd
Thine clear and stainless as a warrior's shield,
Wherein high deeds and noble forms alone
Are brightly imaged forth.

Sylv. What now avail
These recollections?
Seb. What? I have seen thee shrink,
As a murd'rer from the eye of light, before me:
I have earn'd (how dearly and how bitterly
It matters not, but I *have* earn'd at last)
Deep knowledge, fearful wisdom. Now, begone!
Hence to thy guests, and fear not, though arraign'd
E'en of Sebastian's friendship. Make his scorn
(For he *will* scorn thee, as a crouching slave
By all high hearts is scorn'd) thy right, thy charter
Unto vile safety. Let the secret voice,
Whose low upbraidings will not sleep within thee,
Be as a sign, a token of thy claim
To all such guerdons as are shower'd on traitors,
When noble men are crush'd. And fear thou not:—
'Tis but the kingly cedar which the storm
Hurls from his mountain throne:—th' ignoble shrub,
Groveling beneath, may live.
Sylv. It is *thy* part
To tremble for thy life.
Seb. They that have look'd
Upon a heart like thine, should know too well
The worth of life to tremble. Such things make
Brave men, and reckless. Ay, and they whom fate
Would trample should be thus. It is enough—
Thou may'st depart.
Sylv. And thou, if thou dost prize
Thy safety, speed thee hence. [*Exit* SYLVEIRA.
Seb. (*alone.*) And this is he
Who was as mine own soul: whose image rose,
Shadowing my dreams of glory with the thought

That on the sick man's weary couch he lay,
Pining to share my battles!

CHORUS.

Ye winds that sweep
The conquer'd billows of the western deep,
Or wander where the morn
'Midst the resplendent Indian heavens is born,
Waft o'er bright isles, and glorious worlds the fame
Of the crown'd Spaniard's name:
Till in each glowing zone
Its might the nations own,
And bow to him the vassal knee
Whose sceptre shadows realms from sea to sea.

Seb. Away—away! this is no place for him
Whose name hath thus resounded, but is now
A word of desolation. [*Exit.*

ODE ON THE DEFEAT OF KING SEBASTIAN OF PORTUGAL, AND HIS ARMY, IN AFRICA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH OF HERRERA.

FERDINAND DE HERRERA, surnamed the Divine, was a Spanish poet, who lived in the reign of Charles V., and is still considered by the Castilians as one of their classic writers. He aimed at the introduction of a new style into Spanish poetry, and his lyrics are distinguished by the sustained majesty of their language, the frequent recurrence of expressions and images, derived apparently from a fervent study of the prophetic books of Scripture, and the lofty tone of national pride maintained throughout, and justified indeed by the nature of the subjects to which some of these productions are devoted. This last characteristic is blended with a deep and enthusiastic feeling of religion, which rather exalts than tempers the haughty confidence of the poet in the high destinies of his country. Spain is to him what Judea was to the bards who sung beneath the shadow of her palm-trees—the chosen and favoured land, whose people, severed from all others by the purity and devotedness of their faith, are peculiarly called to wreak the vengeance of Heaven upon the infidel.

This triumphant conviction is powerfully expressed in his magnificent Ode on the Battle of Lepanto.

The impression of deep solemnity left upon the mind of the Spanish reader, by another of Herrera's lyric compositions, will, it is feared, be very inadequately conveyed through the medium of the following translation.

"Voz de dolor, y canto de gemido," &c.

A VOICE of woe, a murmur of lament,
A spirit of deep fear and mingled ire;
Let such record the day, the day of wail
For Lusitania's bitter chastening sent!
She who hath seen her power, her fame expire,
And mourns them in the dust, discrown'd and pale!
And let the awful tale
With grief and horror every realm o'ershade,
From Afric's burning main
To the far sea, in other hues array'd,
And the red limits of the Orient's reign,
Whose nations, haughty though subdued, behold
Christ's glorious banner to the winds unfold.

Alas! for those that in embattled power,
And vain array of chariots and of horse,
O desert Libya! sought thy fatal coast!
And trusting not in Him, the eternal source
Of might and glory, but in earthly force,
Making the strength of multitudes their boast,
A flush'd and crested host,
Elate in lofty dreams of victory, trode

Their path of pride, as o'er a conquer'd land
Given for the spoil; nor raised their eyes to God:
And Israel's Holy One withdrew his hand,
Their sole support;—and heavily and prone
They fell—the car, the steed, the rider, all o'er-
thrown!

It came, the hour of wrath, the hour of woe,
Which to deep solitude and tears consign'd
The peopled realm, the realm of joy and mirth;
A gloom was on the heavens, no mantling glow
Announced the morn—it seem'd as nature pined,
And boding clouds obscured the sunbeam's birth;
While, startling the pale earth,
Bursting upon the mighty and the proud
With visitation dread,
Their crests the Eternal, in his anger, bow'd,
And raised barbarian nations o'er their head,
The inflexible, the fierce, who seek not gold,
But vengeance on their foes, relentless, uncontroll'd.

Then was the sword let loose, the flaming sword
Of the strong infidel's ignoble hand,
Amidst that host, the pride, the flower, the crown
Of thy fair knighthood; and the insatiate horde,
Not with thy life content, O ruin'd land!
Sad Lusitania! even thy bright renown
Defaced and trampled down;
And scatter'd, rushing as a torrent flood,
Thy pomp of arms and banners;—till the sands
Became a lake of blood—thy noblest blood!—
The plain a mountain of thy slaughter'd bands.

Strength on thy foes, resistless might was shed;
On thy devoted sons—amaze, and shame, and dread.

Are *these* the conquerors, *these* the lords of fight,
The warrior men, the invincible, the famed,
Who shook the earth with terror and dismay,
Whose spoils were empires?—They that in their might
The haughty strength of savage nations tamed,
And gave the spacious orient realms of day
To desolation's sway,
Making the cities of imperial name
E'en as the desert place?
Where now the fearless heart, the soul of flame?
Thus has their glory closed its dazzling race
In one brief hour? Is this their valour's doom,
On distant shores to fall, and find not even a tomb?

Once were they in their splendour and their pride,
As an imperial cedar on the brow
Of the great Lebanon! It rose, array'd
In its rich pomp of foliage, and of wide
Majestic branches, leaving far below
All children of the forest. To its shade
The waters tribute paid,
Fostering its beauty. Birds found shelter there
Whose flight is of the loftiest through the sky,
And the wild mountain-creatures made their lair
Beneath; and nations by its canopy
Were shadow'd o'er. Supreme it stood, and ne'er
Had earth beheld a tree so excellently fair

But all elated, on its verdant stem,
Confiding solely in its regal height,
It soar'd presumptuous, as for empire born;
And God for this removed its diadem,
And cast it from its regions of delight,
Forth to the spoiler, as a prey and scorn,
By the deep roots uptorn!
And lo! encumb'ring the lone hills it lay,
Shorn of its leaves, dismantled of its state,
While, pale with fear, men hurried far away,
Who in its ample shade had found so late
Their bower of rest; and nature's savage race
'Midst the great ruin sought their dwelling-place.

But thou, base Libya, thou whose arid sand
Hath been a kingdom's death-bed, where one fate
Closed her bright life, and her majestic fame,—
Though to thy feeble and barbarian hand
Hath fall'n the victory, be not thou elate!
Boast not thyself, though thine that day of shame,
Unworthy of a name!
Know, if the Spaniard in his wrath advance,
Aroused to vengeance by a nation's cry,
Pierced by his searching lance,
Soon shalt thou expiate crime with agony,
And thine affrighted streams to ocean's flood
An ample tribute bear of Afric's Paynim blood.

THE SIEGE OF VALENCIA.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

Judicio ha dado esta no vista hazanna
Del valor que en los siglos venideros
Tendrán los Hijos de la fuerte Espanna,
Hijos de tal padres herederos

Hallò sola en Numancia todo quanto
Debe con justo titulo cantarse,
Y lo que puede dar materia al canto.

Numancia de Cervantes.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE history of Spain records two instances of the severe and self-devoting heroism, which forms the subject of the following dramatic poem. The first of these occurred at the siege of Tarifa, which was defended, in 1294, for Sancho, King of Castile, during the rebellion of his brother, Don Juan, by Guzman, surnamed the Good.* The second is related of Alonso Lopez de Texeda, who, until his garrison had been utterly disabled by pestilence, maintained the city of Zamora for the children of Don Pedro the Cruel, against the forces of Henrique of Trastamara.†

* See Quintana's *Vidas de Espanoles Célèbres*, p. 53.

† See the Preface to Southey's *Chronicle of the Cid.*

Impressive as were the circumstances which distinguished both these memorable sieges, it appeared to the author of the following pages that a deeper interest, as well as a stronger colour of nationality, might be imparted to the scenes in which she has feebly attempted "to describe high passions and high actions," by connecting a religious feeling with the patriotism and high-minded loyalty which had thus been proved "faithful unto death," and by surrounding her ideal *dramatis personæ* with recollections derived from the heroic legends of Spanish chivalry. She has, for this reason, employed the agency of imaginary characters, and fixed upon Valencia del Cid as the scene to give them

"A local habitation and a name."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ALVAR GONZALEZ,	*Governor of Valencia.*
ALPHONSO, CARLOS,	*His Sons.*
HERNANDEZ,	*A Priest.*
ABDULLAH,	*A Moorish Prince, Chief of the Army besieging Valencia.*
GARCIAS,	*A Spanish Knight.*
ELMINA,	*Wife to Gonzalez.*
XIMENA,	*Her Daughter.*
THERESA,	*An Attendant.*

Citizens, Soldiers, Attendants, &c.

Scene I.

Room in a Palace of Valencia.—Ximena *sings to a Lute.*

BALLAD.

"Thou hast not been with a festal throng
At the pouring of the wine;
Men bear not from the hall of song
A mien so dark as thine!
There's blood upon thy shield,
There's dust upon thy plume,
Thou hast brought from some disastrous field
That brow of wrath and gloom!"

"And is there blood upon my shield?
Maiden, it well may be!
We have sent the streams, from our battle-field,
All darken'd to the sea!
We have given the founts a stain,
'Midst their woods of ancient pine;
And the ground is wet—but not with rain,
Deep dyed—but not with wine!

"The ground is wet—but not with rain—
We have been in war array,
And the noblest blood of Christian Spain
Hath bathed her soil to-day.
I have seen the strong man die,
And the stripling meet his fate,
Where the mountain-winds go sounding by,
In the Roncesvalles' Strait.

"In the gloomy Roncesvalles' Strait
There are helms and lances cleft;
And they that moved at morn elate
On a bed of heath are left!
There's many a fair young face
Which the war-steed hath gone o'er;
At many a board there is kept a place
For those that come no more!"

"Alas! for love, for woman's breast,
If woe like this must be!
Hast thou seen a youth with an eagle crest,
And a white plume waving free?
With his proud quick-flashing eye,
And his mien of knightly state?
Doth he come from where the swords flash'd high,
In the Roncesvalles' Strait?"

"In the gloomy Roncesvalles' Strait
I saw, and mark'd him well;
For nobly on his steed he sate,
When the pride of manhood fell!
But it is not *youth* which turns
From the field of spears again;
For the boy's high heart too wildly burns,
Till it rests amidst the slain!"

"Thou canst not say that *he* lies low,
The lovely and the brave?
Oh! none could look on his joyous brow,
And think upon the grave!

Dark, dark perchance the day,
Hath been with valour's fate;
But *he* is on his homeward way,
From the Roncesvalles' Strait!"

"There is dust upon his joyous brow,
And o'er his graceful head;
And the war-horse will not wake him now,
Though it browse his greensward bed!
I have seen the stripling die,
And the strong man meet his fate,
Where the mountain-winds go sounding by,
In the Roncesvalles' Strait!"

[ELMINA *enters*.

Elm. Your songs are not as those of other days,
Mine own Ximena! Where is now the young
And buoyant spirit of the morn, which once
Breathed in your spring-like melodies, and woke
Joy's echo from all hearts?

Xim. My mother, this
Is not the free air of our mountain-wilds;
And these are not the halls wherein my voice
First pour'd those gladd'ning strains.

Elm. Alas! thy heart
(I see it well) doth sicken for the pure
Free-wand'ring breezes of the joyous hills,
Where thy young brothers, o'er the rock and heath,
Bound in glad boyhood, e'en as torrent streams
Leap brightly from the heights. Had we not been
Within these walls, thus suddenly begirt,

Thou shouldst have track'd ere now, with step as light,
Their wild-wood paths.
Xim. I would not but have shared
These hours of woe and peril, though the deep
And solemn feelings wak'ning at their voice,
Claim all the wrought-up spirit to themselves,
And will not blend with mirth. The storm doth hush
All floating whispery sounds, all bird-notes wild
O' th' summer-forest, filling earth and heaven
With its own awful music. And 'tis well!
Should not a hero's child be train'd to hear
The trumpet's blast unstartled, and to look
In the fix'd face of death without dismay?
Elm. Woe! woe! that aught so gentle and so young
Should thus be call'd to stand i' the tempest's path,
And bear the token and the hue of death
On a bright soul so soon! I had not shrunk
From mine own lot; but thou, my child, shouldst move,
As a light breeze of heaven, through summer-bowers,
And not o'er foaming billows. We are fall'n
On dark and evil days!
Xim. Ay, days, that wake
All to their tasks!—Youth may not loiter now
In the green walks of spring; and womanhood
Is summon'd unto conflicts, heretofore
The lot of warrior-souls. Strength is born
In the deep silence of long-suffering hearts;
Not amidst joy.

Elm. Hast thou some secret woe
That thus thou speak'st?
Xim. What sorrow should be mine,
Unknown to thee?
Elm. Alas! the baleful air
Wherewith the pestilence in darkness walks
Through the devoted city, like a blight
Amidst the rose-tints of thy cheek hath fall'n,
And wrought an early withering!—Thou hast cross'd
The paths of death, and minister'd to those
O'er whom his shadow rested, till thine eye
Hath changed its glancing sunbeam for a still,
Deep, solemn radiance, and thy brow hath caught
A wild and high expression, which at times
Fades into desolate calmness, most unlike
What youth's bright mien should wear. My gentle child!
I look on thee in fear!
Xim. Thou hast no cause
To fear for me. When the wild clash of steel,
And the deep tambour, and the heavy step
Of armed men, break on our morning dreams!
When, hour by hour, the noble and the brave
Are falling round us, and we deem it much
To give them funeral-rites, and call them blest
If the good sword, in its own stormy hour,
Hath done its work upon them, ere disease
Had chill'd their fiery blood;—it is no time
For the light mien wherewith, in happier hours,
We trode the woodland mazes, when young leaves
Were whisp'ring in the gale.—My father comes—

Oh! speak of me no more. I would not shade
His princely aspect with a thought less high
Than his proud duties claim.

[GONZALEZ *enters.*

Elm. My noble lord!
Welcome from this day's toil!—It is the hour
Whose shadows, as they deepen, bring repose
Unto all weary men; and wilt not thou
Free thy mail'd bosom from the corslet's weight,
To rest at fall of eve?

Gon. There may be rest
For the tired peasant, when the vesper-bell
Doth send him to his cabin, and beneath
His vine and olive he may sit at eve,
Watching his children's sport: but unto *him*
Who keeps the watch-place on the mountain-height,
When Heaven lets loose the storms that chasten realms
—Who speaks of rest?

Xim. My father, shall I fill
The wine-cup for thy lips, or bring the lute
Whose sounds thou lovest?

Gon. If there be strains of power
To rouse a spirit, which in triumphant scorn
May cast off nature's feebleness, and hold
Its proud career unshackled, dashing down
Tears and fond thoughts to earth; give voice to those!
I have need of such, Ximena!—we must hear
No melting music now!

Xim. I know all high
Heroic ditties of the elder-time,

Sung by the mountain-Christians,[1] in the holds
Of th' everlasting hills, whose snows yet bear
The print of Freedom's step; and all wild strains
Wherein the dark serranos * teach the rocks,
And the pine-forests, deeply to resound
The praise of later champions. Wouldst thou hear
The war-song of thine ancestor, the Cid?

Gon. Ay, speak of him; for in that name is power,
Such as might rescue kingdoms! Speak of him!
We are his children! They that can look back
I' th' annals of their house on such a name,
How should *they* take dishonour by the hand,
And o'er the threshold of their father's halls
First lead her as a guest?

Elm. Oh, why is this?
How my heart sinks!

Gon. It must not fail thee *yet*,
Daughter of heroes!—thine inheritance
Is strength to meet all conflicts. Thou canst number
In thy long line of glorious ancestry
Men, the bright offering of whose blood hath made
The ground it bathed e'en as an altar, whence
High thoughts shall rise for ever. Bore they not,
'Midst flame and sword, their witness of the Cross,
With its victorious inspiration girt
As with a conqueror's robe, till th' infidel,
O'erawed, shrank back before them?—Ay, the earth
Doth call them martyrs, but *their* agonies

* *Serranos*, mountaineers.

Were of a moment, tortures whose brief aim
Was to destroy, within whose powers and scope
Lay nought but dust.—And earth doth call them *martyrs!*
Why, Heaven but claim'd their blood, their lives and not
The things which grow as tendrils round their hearts;
No, not their children!
Elm. Mean'st thou?—know'st thou aught?—
I cannot utter it—My sons! my sons!
Is it of them?—Oh! wouldst thou speak of them?
Gon. A mother's heart divineth but too well!
Elm. Speak, I adjure thee!—I can bear it all.—
Where are my children?
Gon. In the Moorish camp
Whose lines have girt the city.
Xim. But they live?
—All is not lost, my mother!
Elm. Say, they live.
Gon. Elmina, still they live.
Elm. But captives!—They
Whom my fond heart had imaged to itself
Bounding from cliff to cliff amidst the wilds
Where the rock-eagle seem'd not more secure
In its rejoicing freedom!—And my boys
Are captives with the Moor!—Oh! how was this?
Gon. Alas! our brave Alphonso, in the pride
Of boyish daring, left our mountain-halls,
With his young brother, eager to behold
The face of noble war. Thence on their way
Were the rash wanderers captured.

Elm. 'Tis enough.
—And when shall they be ransom'd?
Gon. There is ask'd
A ransom far too high.
Elm. What! have we wealth
Which might redeem a monarch, and our sons
The while wear fetters?—Take thou all for them,
And we will cast our worthless grandeur from us,
As 'twere a cumbrous robe!—Why *thou* art one,
To whose high nature pomp hath ever been
But as the plumage to a warrior's helm,
Worn or thrown off as lightly. And for me,
Thou know'st not how serenely I could take
The peasant's lot upon me, so my heart,
Amidst its deep affections undisturb'd,
May dwell in silence.
Xim. Father! doubt thou not
But we will bind ourselves to poverty,
With glad devotedness, if this, but this,
May win them back.—Distrust us not, my father!
We can bear all things.
Gon. Can ye bear disgrace?
Xim. We were not born for this.
Gon. No, thou say'st well!
Hold to that lofty faith.—My wife, my child!
Hath earth no treasures richer than the gems
Torn from her secret caverns?—If by them
Chains may be riven, then let the captive spring
Rejoicing to the light!—But he, for whom
Freedom and life may but be worn with shame,
Hath nought to do, save fearlessly to fix
His stedfast look on the majestic heavens,
And proudly die!

Elm. Gonzalez, *who* must die?
Gon. (*hurriedly.*) They on whose lives a fearful price is set,
But to be paid by treason!—Is 't enough?
Or must I yet seek words?
Elm. That look saith more!—
Thou canst not mean——
Gon. I do!—why dwells there not
Power in a glance to speak it?—They must die!
They—must their names be told—*Our sons* must die
Unless I yield the city!
Xim. Oh! look up!
My mother, sink not thus!—Until the grave
Shut from our sight its victims, there is hope.
Elm. (*in a low voice.*) Whose knell was in the breeze?—No, no, not *theirs!*
Whose was the blessed voice that spoke of hope?
—And there is hope!—I will not be subdued—
I will not hear a whisper of despair!
For nature is all-powerful, and her breath
Moves like a quickening spirit o'er the depths
Within a father's heart.—Thou too, Gonzalez,
Wilt tell me there is hope!
Gon. (*solemnly.*) Hope but in Him
Who bade the patriarch lay his fair young son
Bound on the shrine of sacrifice, and when
The bright steel quiver'd in the father's hand
Just raised to strike, sent forth his awful voice
Through the still clouds, and on the breathless air
Commanding to withhold!—Earth has no hope:
It rests with Him.
Elm. *Thou* canst not tell me this!

Thou father of my sons, within whose hands
Doth lie thy children's fate.
Gon. If there have been
Men in whose bosoms nature's voice hath made
Its accents as the solitary sound
Of an o'erpowering torrent, silencing
Th' austere and yet divine remonstrances
Whisper'd by faith and honour, lift thy hands;
And, to that Heaven which arms the brave with strength,
Pray, that the father of thy sons may ne'er
Be thus found wanting!
Elm. Then their doom is seal'd!—
Thou wilt not save thy children?
Gon. Hast thou cause,
Wife of my youth! to deem it lies within
The bounds of possible things, that I should link
My name to that word—*traitor?*—They that sleep
On their proud battle-fields, thy sires and mine,
Died not for this!
Elm. Oh, cold and hard of heart!
Thou shouldst be born for empire, since thy soul
Thus lightly from all human bonds can free
Its haughty flight!—Men! men! too much is yours
Of vantage; ye that with a sound, a breath,
A shadow, thus can fill the desolate space
Of rooted up affections, o'er whose void
Our yearning hearts must wither!—So it is,
Dominion must be won!—Nay, leave me not—
My heart is bursting, and I *must* be heard!
Heaven hath given power to mortal agony,
As to the elements in their hour of might

And mastery o'er creation!—Who shall dare
To mock that fearful strength!—I *must* be heard!
Give me my sons!

Gon. That they may live to hide
With covering hands th' indignant flush of shame
On their young brows, when men shall speak of him
They call'd their father!—Was the oath, whereby,
On th' altar of my faith, I bound myself,
With an unswerving spirit to maintain
This free and Christian city for my God,
And for my king, a writing traced on sand?
That passionate tears should wash it from the earth,
Or e'en the life-drops of a bleeding heart
Efface it, as a billow sweeps away
The last light vessel's wake?—Then never more
Let man's deep vows be trusted!—though enforced
By all th' appeals of high remembrances,
And silent claims o' th' sepulchres, wherein
His fathers with their stainless glory sleep,
On their good swords! Think'st thou *I* feel no pangs?
He that hath given me sons doth know the heart
Whose treasure he recalls.—Of this no more.
'Tis vain. I tell thee that th' inviolate cross
Still from our ancient temples, must look up
Through the blue heavens of Spain, though at its foot
I perish, with my race. Thou *darest* not ask
That I, the son of warriors—men who died
To fix it on that proud supremacy—
Should tear the sign of our victorious faith,
From its high place of sunbeams, for the Moor
In impious joy to trample!

Elm. Scorn me not
In mine extreme of misery!—Thou art strong—
Thy heart is not as mine.—My brain grows wild;
I know not what I ask!—And yet 'twere but
Anticipating fate—since it must fall,
That cross *must* fall at last! There is no power,
No hope within this city of the grave,
To keep its place on high. Her sultry air
Breathes heavily of death, her warriors sink
Beneath their ancient banners, ere the Moor
Hath bent his bow against them; for the shaft
Of pestilence flies more swiftly to its mark,
Than th' arrow of the desert. Even the skies
O'erhang the desolate splendour of her domes
With an ill omen's aspect, shaping forth,
From the dull clouds, wild menacing forms and signs
Foreboding ruin. *Man* might be withstood,
But who shall cope with famine and disease
When leagued with armed foes?—Where now the aid,
Where the long-promised lances, of Castile?
—We are forsaken in our utmost need—
By Heaven and earth forsaken!
Gon. If this be
(And yet I will not deem it), we must fall
As men that in severe devotedness
Have chosen their part, and bound themselves to death,
Through high conviction that their suffering land,
By the free blood of martyrdom alone,
Shall call deliverance down.
Elm. Oh! I have stood

Beside thee through the beating storms of life,
With the true heart of unrepining love,
As the poor peasant's mate doth cheerily,
In the parch'd vineyard, or the harvest-field,
Bearing her part, sustain with him the heat
And burden of the day;—But now the hour,
The heavy hour is come, when human strength
Sinks down, a toil-worn pilgrim, in the dust,
Owning that woe is mightier!—Spare me yet
This bitter cup, my husband!—Let not her,
The mother of the lovely, sit and mourn
In her unpeopled home, a broken stem,
O'er its fallen roses dying!

Gon. Urge me not,
Thou that through all sharp conflicts hast been found
Worthy a brave man's love!—oh, urge me not
To guilt, which through the midst of blinding tears,
In its own hues thou seest not!—Death may scarce
Bring aught like this!

Elm. All, all thy gentle race,
The beautiful beings that around thee grew,
Creatures of sunshine! Wilt thou doom them all?
—She too, thy daughter—doth her smile unmark'd
Pass from thee, with its radiance, day by day?
Shadows are gathering round her—seest thou not
The misty dimness of the spoiler's breath
Hangs o'er her beauty, and the face which made
The summer of our hearts, now doth but send,
With every glance, deep bodings through the soul,
Telling of early fate.

Gon. I see a change
Far nobler on her brow!—She is as one,

Who, at the trumpet's sudden call, hath risen
From the gay banquet, and in scorn cast down
The wine-cup, and the garland, and the lute
Of festal hours, for the good spear and helm,
Beseeming sterner tasks.—Her eye hath lost
The beam which laugh'd upon th' awakening heart,
E'en as morn breaks o'er earth. But far within
Its full dark orb, a light hath sprung, whose source
Lies deeper in the soul.—And let the torch
Which but illumed the glittering pageant, fade!
The altar-flame, i' th' sanctuary's recess,
Burns quenchless, being of heaven!—She hath put on
Courage, and faith, and generous constancy,
Even as a breastplate.—Ay, men look on her,
As she goes forth, serenely to her tasks,
Binding the warrior's wounds, and bearing fresh
Cool draughts to fever'd lips; they look on her,
Thus moving in her beautiful array
Of gentle fortitude, and bless the fair
Majestic vision, and unmurmuring turn
Unto their heavy toils.

Elm. And seest thou not
In that high faith and strong collectedness,
A fearful inspiration?—*They* have cause
To tremble, who behold th' unearthly light
Of high, and, it may be, prophetic thought,
Investing youth with grandeur!—From the grave
It rises, on whose shadowy brink thy child
Waits but a father's hand to snatch her back
Into the laughing sunshine.—Kneel with me;
Ximena, kneel beside me, and implore
That which a deeper, more prevailing voice

Than ours doth ask, and will not be denied;
—His children's lives!
Xim. Alas! this may not be,
Mother!—I cannot. [*Exit* XIMENA.
Gon. My heroic child!
—A terrible sacrifice thou claim'st, O God!
From creatures in whose agonizing hearts
Nature is strong as death!
Elm. Is 't thus in thine?
Away!—what time is given thee to resolve
On—what I cannot utter?—Speak! thou know'st
Too well what I would say.
Gon. Until—ask not!
The time is brief.
Elm. Thou said'st—I heard not right—
Gon. The time is brief.
Elm. What! must we burst all ties
Wherewith the thrilling chords of life are twined;
And, for this task's fulfilment, can it be
That man in his cold heartlessness, hath dared,
To number and to mete us forth the sands
Of hours, nay, moments?—Why, the sentenced wretch,
He on whose soul there rests a brother's blood
Pour'd forth in slumber, is allow'd more time
To wean his turbulent passions from the world
His presence doth pollute!—It is not thus!
We must have time to school us.
Gon. We have but
To bow the head in silence, when Heaven's voice
Calls back the things we love.

Elm. Love! love!—there are soft smiles and gentle words,
And there are faces, skilful to put on
The look we trust in—and 'tis mockery all!
—A faithless mist, a desert-vapour, wearing
The brightness of clear waters, thus to cheat
The thirst that semblance kindled!—There is none,
In all this cold and hollow world, no fount
Of deep, strong, deathless love, save that within
A mother's heart.—It is but pride, wherewith
To his fair son the father's eye doth turn,
Watching his growth. Ay, on the boy he looks,
The bright glad creature springing in his path,
But as the heir of his great name, the young
And stately tree, whose rising strength erelong
Shall bear his trophies well.—And this is love!
This is *man's* love!—What marvel?—*you* ne'er made
Your breast the pillow of his infancy,
While to the fulness of your heart's glad heavings
His fair cheek rose and fell; and his bright hair
Waved softly to your breath!—*You* ne'er kept watch
Beside him, till the last pale star had set,
And morn, all dazzling, as in triumph, broke
On your dim weary eye; not *yours* the face
Which, early faded through fond care for him,
Hung o'er his sleep, and, duly as heaven's light,
Was there to greet his wak'ning! *You* ne'er smooth'd
His couch, ne'er sung him to his rosy rest,
Caught his least whisper, when his voice from your,
Had learn'd soft utterance; press'd your lip to his,
When fever parch'd it; hush'd his wayward cries,

With patient, vigilant, never-wearied love!
No! these are *woman's* tasks!—In these her youth,
And bloom of cheek, and buoyancy of heart,
Steal from her all unmark'd!—My boys! my boys!
Hath vain affection borne with all for this?
—Why were ye given me?
Gon. Is there strength in man
Thus to endure? That thou couldst read, through all
Its depths of silent agony, the heart
Thy voice of woe doth rend!
Elm. Thy heart—*thy* heart!—Away! it feels not *now!*
But an hour comes to tame the mighty man
Unto the infant's weakness; nor shall Heaven
Spare you that bitter chastening!—May you live
To be alone, when loneliness doth seem
Most heavy to sustain!—For me, my voice
Of prayer and fruitless weeping shall be soon
With all forgotten sounds; my quiet place
Low with my lovely ones, and we shall sleep,
Though kings lead armies o'er us, we shall sleep,
Wrapt in earth's covering mantle!—you the while
Shall sit within your vast, forsaken halls,
And hear the wild and melancholy winds
Moan through their drooping banners, never more
To wave above your race. Ay, then call up
Shadows—dim phantoms from ancestral tombs,
But all all—*glorious*—conquerors, chieftains, kings,
To people that cold void!—And when the strength
From your right arm hath melted, when the blast
Of the shrill clarion gives your heart no more
A fiery wakening; if at last you pine

For the glad voices, and the bounding steps,
Once through your home re-echoing, and the clasp
Of twining arms, and all the joyous light
Of eyes that laugh'd with youth, and made your board
A place of sunshine;—when those days are come.
Then, in your utter desolation, turn
To the cold world, the smiling, faithless world,
Which hath swept past you long, and bid it quench
Your soul's deep thirst with *fame!* immortal *fame!*
Fame to the sick of heart!—a gorgeous robe.
A crown of victory, unto him that dies
I' th' burning waste, for water!

Gon. This from *thee!*
Now the last drop of bitterness is pour'd.
Elmina—I forgive thee! [*Exit* ELMINA.
Aid me, Heaven!
From whom alone is power!—Oh! thou hast set
Duties, so stern of aspect, in my path,
They almost, to my startled gaze, assume
The hue of things less hallow'd! Men have sunk
Unblamed beneath such trials! Doth not He
Who made us know the limits of our strength?
My wife! my sons!—Away! I must not pause
To give my heart one moment's mastery thus!
[*Exit* GONZALEZ.

SCENE II.—*The Aisle of a Gothic Church.*

HERNANDEZ, GARCIAS, *and others.*

Her. The rites are closed. Now, valiant men depart,
Each to his place—I may not say, of rest—
Your faithful vigils for your sons may win
What must not be your own. Ye are as those
Who sow, in peril and in care, the seed
Of the fair tree, beneath whose stately shade
They may not sit. But bless'd be those who toil
For after-days!—All high and holy thoughts
Be with you, warriors, through the lingering hours
Of the night-watch!

Gar. Ay, father! we have need
Of high and holy thoughts, wherewith to fence
Our hearts against despair. Yet have I been
From youth a son of war. The stars have look'd
A thousand times upon my couch of heath,
Spread 'midst the wild sierras, by some stream
Whose dark-red waves look'd e'en as though their source
Lay not in rocky caverns, but the veins
Of noble hearts; while many a knightly crest
Roll'd with them to the deep. And, in the years
Of my long exile and captivity,
With the fierce Arab I have watch'd beneath
The still, pale shadow of some lonely palm,
At midnight in the desert; while the wind
Swell'd with the lion's roar, and heavily

The fearfulness and might of solitude
Press'd on my weary heart.
Her. (*thoughtfully.*) Thou little know'st
Of what is solitude!—I tell thee, those
For whom—in earth's remotest nook, howe'er
Divided from their path by chain on chain
Of mighty mountains, and the amplitude
Of rolling seas—there beats one human heart,
There breathes one being, unto whom their name
Comes with a thrilling and a gladd'ning sound
Heard o'er the din of life, are not alone!
Not on the deep, nor in the wild, alone;
For there is that on earth with which they hold
A brotherhood of soul!—Call *him* alone,
Who stands shut out from this!—and let not those
Whose homes are bright with sunshine and with love,
Put on the insolence of happiness,
Glorying in that proud lot!—A lonely hour
Is on its way to each, to all; for Death
Knows no companionship.
Gar. I have look'd on Death
In field, and storm, and flood. But never yet
Hath aught weigh'd down my spirit to a mood
Of sadness, dreaming o'er dark auguries,
Like this, our watch by midnight. Fearful things
Are gathering round us. Death upon the earth,
Omens in heaven!—The summer skies put forth
No clear bright stars above us, but at times,
Catching some comet's fiery hue of wrath,
Marshal their clouds to armies, traversing
Heaven with the rush of meteor-steeds, th' array
Of spears and banners, tossing like the pines

Of Pyrenean forests, when the storm
Doth sweep the mountains.
Her. Ay, last night I too
Kept vigil, gazing on the angry heavens;
And I beheld the meeting and the shock
Of those wild hosts i' th' air, when, as they closed,
A red and sultry mist, like that which mantles
The thunder's path, fell o'er them. Then were flung
Through the dull glare, broad cloudy banners forth,
And chariots seem'd to whirl, and steeds to sink,
Bearing down crested warriors. But all this
Was dim and shadowy;—then swift darkness rush'd
Down on the unearthly battle, as the deep
Swept o'er the Egyptian's armament.—I look'd—
And all that fiery field of plumes and spears
Was blotted from heaven's face!—I look'd again—
And from the brooding mass of cloud leap'd forth
One meteor-sword, which o'er the reddening sea
Shook with strange motion, such as earthquakes give
Unto a rocking citadel!—I beheld,
And yet my spirit sunk not.
Gar. Neither deem
That mine hath blench'd. But these are sights and sounds
To awe the firmest.—Know'st thou what we hear
At midnight from the walls?—Were 't but the deep
Barbaric horn, or Moorish tambour's peal,
Thence might the warrior's heart catch impulses
Quickening its fiery currents. But our ears
Are pierced by other tones. We hear the knell
For brave men in their noon of strength cut down,
And the shrill wail of woman, and the dirge

Faint swelling through the streets. Then e'en the air
Hath strange and fitful murmurs of lament,
As if the viewless watchers of the land
Sigh'd on its hollow breezes!—To my soul,
The torrent rush of battle, with its din
Of trampling steeds and ringing panoply,
Were, after these faint sounds of drooping woe,
As the free sky's glad music unto him
Who leaves a couch of sickness.

Her. (*with solemnity.*) If to plunge
In the mid-waves of combat, as they bear
Chargers and spearmen onwards; and to make
A reckless bosom's front the buoyant mark,
On that wild current, for ten thousand arrows;
If *thus* to dare were valour's noblest aim,
Lightly might fame be won! But there are things
Which ask a spirit of more exalted pitch,
And courage temper'd with a holier fire!
Well may'st thou say that these are fearful times,
Therefore be firm, be patient!—There is strength,
And a fierce instinct, e'en in common souls,
To bear up manhood with a stormy joy,
When red swords meet in lightning!—But our task
Is more and nobler!—We have to endure,
And to keep watch, and to arouse a land,
And to defend an altar!—If we fall,
So that our blood make but the millionth part
Of Spain's great ransom, we may count it joy
To die upon her bosom, and beneath
The banner of her faith!—Think but on this,
And gird your hearts with silent fortitude,
Suffering, yet hoping all things—Fare ye well.

Gar. Father, farewell.

[*Exeunt* GARCIAS *and his followers.*

Her. These men have earthly ties
And bondage on their natures! To the cause
Of God, and Spain's revenge, they bring but half
Their energies and hopes. But he whom Heaven
Hath call'd to be th' awakener of a land,
Should have his soul's affections all absorb'd
In that majestic purpose, and press on
To its fulfilment, as a mountain-born
And mighty stream, with all its vassal-rills,
Sweeps proudly to the ocean, pausing not
To dally with the flowers. Hark! What quick step
Comes hurrying through the gloom at this dead hour?

[ELMINA *enters.*

Elm. Are not all hours as one to misery? Why
Should *she* take note of time, for whom the day
And night have lost their blessed attributes
Of sunshine and repose?

Her. I know thy griefs;
But there are trials for the noble heart,
Wherein its own deep fountains must supply
All it can hope of comfort. Pity's voice
Comes with vain sweetness to th' unheeding ear
Of anguish, e'en as music heard afar
On the green shore, by him who perishes
'Midst rocks and eddying waters.

Elm. Think thou not
I sought thee but for pity. I am come
For that which grief is priv'leged to demand

With an imperious claim, from all whose form,
Whose human form, doth seal them unto suffering!
Father! I ask thine *aid.*
Her. There is no aid
For thee or for thy children, but with Him
Whose presence is around us in the cloud,
As in the shining and the glorious light.
Elm. There is no aid!—art thou a man of God?
Art thou a man of sorrow?—for the world
Doth call thee such—and hast thou not been taught
By God and sorrow?—mighty as they are,
To own the claims of misery?
Her. Is there power
With me to save thy sons?—implore of Heaven!
Elm. Doth not Heaven work its purposes by man?
I tell thee *thou* canst save them! Art thou not
Gonzalez' counsellor? Unto him thy words
Are e'en as oracles——
Her. And therefore?—Speak!
The noble daughter of Pelayo's line
Hath nought to ask, unworthy of the name
Which is a nation's heritage. Dost thou shrink?
Elm. Have pity on me, father! I must speak
That, from the thought of which but yesterday
I had recoil'd in scorn!—But this is past.
Oh! we grow humble in our agonies,
And to the dust—their birthplace—bow the heads
That wore the crown of glory!—I am weak—
My chastening is far more than I can bear.
Her. These are no times for weakness. On our hills

The ancient cedars, in their gather'd might,
Are battling with the tempest ; and the flower
Which cannot meet its driving blast must die
—But thou hast drawn thy nurture from a stem
Unwont to bend or break.—Lift thy proud head,
Daughter of Spain !—What would'st thou with thy lord ?

Elm. Look not upon me thus !—I have no power
To tell thee. Take thy keen disdainful eye
Off from my soul !—What ! am I sunk to this ?
I, whose blood sprung from heroes !—How my sons
Will scorn the mother that would bring disgrace
On their majestic line !—My sons ! my sons !
—Now is all else forgotten !—I had once
A babe that in the early spring-time lay
Sickening upon my bosom, till at last,
When earth's young flowers were opening to the sun,
Death sunk on his meek eyelid, and I deem'd
All sorrow light to mine !—But now the fate
Of all my children seems to brood above me
In the dark thunder-clouds !—Oh ! I have power
And voice unfaltering now to speak my prayer
And my last lingering hope, that thou should'st win
The father to relent, to save his sons !

Her. By yielding up the city ?

Elm. Rather say
By meeting that which gathers close upon us
Perchance one day the sooner !—Is't not so ?
Must we not yield at last ?—How long shall man
Array his single breast against disease,
And famine, and the sword ?

Her. How long ?—While he

Who shadows forth his power more gloriously
In the high deeds and sufferings of the soul,
Than in the circling heavens, with all their stars,
Or the far-sounding deep, doth send abroad
A spirit, which takes affliction for its mate,
In the good cause, with solemn joy!—How long?
—And who art *thou*, that, in the littleness
Of thine own selfish purpose, would'st set bounds
To the free current of all noble thought
And generous action, bidding its bright waves
Be stay'd, and flow no further?—But the Power
Whose interdict is laid on seas and orbs,
To chain them in from wandering, hath assign'd
No limits unto that which man's high strength
Shall, through its aid, achieve!

Elm. Oh! there are times,
When *all* that hopeless courage can achieve
But sheds a mournful beauty o'er the fate
Of those who die in vain.

Her. *Who* dies in vain
Upon his country's war-fields, and within
The shadow of her altars?—Feeble heart!
I tell thee that the voice of noble blood,
Thus pour'd for faith and freedom, hath a tone
Which, from the night of ages, from the gulf
Of death, shall burst, and make its high appeal
Sound unto earth and heaven! Ay, let the land,
Whose sons, through centuries of woe hath striven,
And perish'd by her temples, sink awhile,
Borne down in conflict!—But immortal seed
Deep, by heroic suffering, hath been sown
On all her ancient hills; and generous hope

Knows that the soil, in its good time, shall yet
Bring forth a glorious harvest!—Earth receives
Not one red drop from faithful hearts in vain.
Elm. Then it must be!—And ye will make those lives,
Those young bright lives, an offering—to retard
Our doom one day!
Her. The mantle of that day
May wrap the fate of Spain!
Elm. What led me here?
Why did I turn to *thee* in my despair?
Love hath no ties upon thee; what had I
To hope from *thee*, thou lone and childless man!
Go to thy silent home!—there no young voice
Shall bid thee welcome, no light footstep spring
Forth at the sound of thine!—What knows thy heart?
Her. Woman! how darest thou taunt me with my woes?
Thy children too shall perish, and I say
It shall be well!—Why takest thou thought for them?
Wearing thy heart, and wasting down thy life
Unto its dregs, and making night thy time
Of care yet more intense, and casting health,
Unprized, to melt away, i' th' bitter cup
Thou minglest for thyself?—Why, what hath earth
To pay thee back for this? Shall they not live
(If the sword spare them now) to prove how soon
All love may be forgotten?—Years of thought,
Long faithful watchings, looks of tenderness,
That changed not, though to change be this world's law—

Shall they not flush thy cheek with shame, whose blood
Marks, e'en like branding iron?—to thy sick heart
Make death a want, as sleep to weariness?
Doth not all hope end thus?—or e'en at best,
Will they not leave thee?—far from thee seek room
For the o'erflowings of their fiery souls,
On life's wide ocean?—Give the bounding steed,
Or the wing'd bark to youth, that his free course
May be o'er hills and seas; and weep thou not
In thy forsaken home, for the bright world
Lies all before him, and be sure he wastes
No thought on thee!

Elm. Not so! it is not so!
Thou dost but torture me!—*My* sons are kind,
And brave, and gentle.

Her. Others too have worn
The semblance of all good. Nay, stay thee yet;
I will be calm, and thou shalt learn how earth,
The fruitful in all agonies, hath woes
Which far outweigh thine own.

Elm. It may not be!
Whose grief is like a mother's for her sons?

Her. *My* son lay stretch'd upon his battle-bier,
And there were hands wrung o'er him which had caught
Their hue from his young blood!

Elm. What tale is this?

Her. Read you no records in this mien, of things
Whose traces on man's aspect are not such
As the breeze leaves on water?—Lofty birth,
War, peril, power?—Affliction's hand is strong,

If it erase the haughty characters
They grave so deep!—I have not always been
That which I am. The name I bore is not
Of those which perish!—I was once a chief—
A warrior—nor as now, a lonely man!
I was a father!
Elm. Then thy heart can *feel!*
Thou wilt have pity!
Her. Should I pity *thee?*
Thy sons will perish gloriously—their blood——
Elm. Their blood! my children's blood!—Thou speak'st as 'twere
Of casting down a wine-cup, in the mirth
And wantonness of feasting!—My fair boys!
—Man! hast *thou* been a father?
Her. Let them die!
Let them die *now*, thy children! so thy heart
Shall wear their beautiful image all undimm'd
Within it, to the last! Nor shalt thou learn
The bitter lesson, of what worthless dust
Are framed the idols, whose false glory binds
Earth's fetter on our souls!—Thou think'st it much
To mourn the early dead; but there are tears
Heavy with deeper anguish! We endow
Those whom we love, in our fond passionate blindness,
With power upon our souls, too absolute
To be a mortal's trust! Within their hands
We lay the flaming sword, whose stroke alone
Can reach our hearts, and *they* are merciful,
As they are strong, that wield it not to pierce us!
—Ay, fear them, fear the loved!—Had I but wept

O'er my son's grave, or o'er a babe's, where tears
Are as spring dew-drops, glittering in the sun,
And brightening the young verdure, *I* might still
Have loved and trusted!
Elm. (*disdainfully.*) But he fell in war!
And hath not glory medicine in her cup
For the brief pangs of nature?
Her. Glory!—Peace,
And listen!—By my side the stripling grew,
Last of my line. I rear'd him to take joy
I' th' blaze of arms, as eagles train their young
To look upon the day-king!—His quick blood
Even to his boyish cheek would mantle up,
When the heavens rang with trumpets, and his eye
Flash with the spirit of a race whose deeds—
—But this availeth not!—Yet he *was* brave.
I've seen him clear himself a path in fight
As lightning through a forest, and his plume
Waved like a torch, above the battle-storm,
The soldier's guide, when princely crests had sunk,
And banners were struck down.—Around my steps
Floated his fame, like music, and I lived
But in the lofty sound. But when my heart
In one frail ark had ventured all, when most
He seem'd to stand between my soul and heaven,
—Then came the thunder-stroke!
Elm. 'Tis ever thus!
And the unquiet and foreboding sense
That thus 'twill ever be, doth link itself
Darkly with all deep love!—He died?
Her. Not so!
—Death! Death!—Why, earth should be a paradise,

To make that name so fearful!—Had he died,
With his young fame about him for a shroud,
I had not learn'd the might of agony,
To bring proud natures low!—No! he fell off—
—Why do I tell thee this;—What right hast *thou*
To learn how pass'd the glory from my house?
Yet listen!—He forsook me!—He, that was
As mine own soul, forsook me! trampled o'er
The ashes of his sires!—ay, leagued himself
E'en with the infidel, the curse of Spain;
And, for the dark eye of a Moorish maid,
Abjured his faith, his God!—Now, talk of death!

Elm. Oh! I can pity thee——

Her. There's more to hear.
I braced the corslet o'er my heart's deep wound,
And cast my troubled spirit on the tide
Of war and high events, whose stormy waves
Might bear it up from sinking;——

Elm. And ye met
No more?

Her. Be still!—We did!—we met *once* more.
God had his own high purpose to fulfil,
Or think'st thou that the sun in his bright heaven
Had look'd upon such things?—We met *once more*.
That was an hour to leave its lightning-mark
Sear'd upon brain and bosom! There had been
Combat on Ebro's banks, and when the day
Sank in red clouds, it faded from a field
Still held by Moorish lances. Night closed round—
A night of sultry darkness, in the shadow
Of whose broad wing, e'en unto death, I strove
Long with a turban'd champion; but my sword

Was heavy with God's vengeance—and prevail'd.
He fell—my heart exulted—and I stood
In gloomy triumph o'er him. Nature gave
No sign of horror, for 'twas Heaven's decree!
He strove to speak—but I had done the work
Of wrath too well;—yet in his last deep moan
A dreadful something of familiar sound
Came o'er my shuddering sense. The moon look'd forth,
And I beheld—speak not!—twas he—my son!
My boy lay dying there! He raised one glance,
And knew me—for he sought with feeble hand
To cover his glazed eyes. A darker veil
Sank o'er them soon.—I will not have thy look
Fix'd on me thus!—Away!

Elm. Thou hast seen this,
Thou hast *done* this—and yet thou liv'st?

Her. I live!
And know'st thou wherefore?—On my soul there fell
A horror of great darkness, which shut out
All earth, and heaven, and hope. I cast away
The spear and helm, and made the cloister's shade
The home of my despair. But a deep voice
Came to me through the gloom, and sent its tones
Far through my bosom's depths. And I awoke,
Ay, as the mountain-cedar doth shake off
Its weight of wintry snow, e'en so I shook
Despondence from my soul, and knew myself
Seal'd by that blood wherewith my hands were dyed,
And set apart, and fearfully mark'd out
Unto a mighty task!—To rouse the soul

Of Spain as from the dead; and to lift up
The cross, her sign of victory, on the hills,
Gathering her sons to battle!—And my voice
Must be as freedom's trumpet on the winds,
From Roncesvalles to the blue sea-waves
Where Calpe looks on Afric; till the land
Have fill'd her cup of vengeance!—Ask me *now*
To yield the Christian city, that its fanes
May rear the minaret in the face of Heaven!—
But death shall have a bloodier vintage-feast
Ere that day come!

Elm. I ask thee this no more,
For I am hopeless now.—But yet one boon—
Hear me, by all thy woes!—Thy voice hath power
Through the wide city—here I cannot rest:—
Aid me to pass the gates!

Her. And wherefore?

Elm. Thou,
That *wert* a father, and art now—alone!
Canst *thou* ask "wherefore?"—Ask the wretch whose sands
Have not an hour to run, whose failing limbs
Have but one earthly journey to perform,
Why, on his pathway to the place of death,
Ay, when the very axe is glistening cold
Upon his dizzy sight, his pale, parch'd lip
Implores a cup of water?—Why, the stroke
Which trembles o'er him in itself shall bring
Oblivion of all wants, yet who denies
Nature's last prayer?—I tell thee that the thirst
Which burns my spirit up is agony
To be endured no more!—And I *must* look

Upon my children's faces, I must hear
Their voices, ere they perish!—But hath Heaven
Decreed that they *must* perish?—Who shall say
If in yon Moslem camp there beats no heart
Which prayers and tears may melt?

Her. There!—with the Moor!
Let him fill up the measure of his guilt!
—'Tis madness all!—How would'st thou pass th'array
Of armed foes?

Elm. Oh! free doth sorrow pass,
Free and unquestion'd, through a suffering world!

Her. This must not be. Enough of woe is laid
E'en now upon thy lord's heroic soul,
For man to bear, unsinking. Press thou not
Too heavily th' o'erburthen'd heart.—Away!
Bow down the knee, and send thy prayers for strength
Up to Heaven's gate.—Farewell!

[*Exit* HERNANDEZ.

Elm. Are all men thus?
—Why, were 't not better they should fall e'en now
Than live to shut their hearts, in haughty scorn,
Against the sufferer's pleadings?—But no, no!
Who can be like *this* man, that slew his son,
Yet wears his life still proudly, and a soul
Untamed upon his brow? *(After a pause.*
There's one, whose arms
Have borne my children in their infancy,
And on whose knees they sported, and whose hand
Hath led them oft—a vassal of their sire's;
And I will seek him: he may lend me aid,
When all beside pass on.

DIRGE, HEARD WITHOUT.

Thou to thy rest art gone,
High heart! and what are we,
While o'er our heads the storm sweeps on,
That we should mourn for thee?

Free grave and peaceful bier
To the buried son of Spain!
To those that live, the lance and spear,
And well if not the chain!

Be *theirs* to weep the dead,
As they sit beneath their vines,
Whose flowery land hath borne no tread
Of spoilers o'er its shrines!

Thou hast thrown off the load
Which we must yet sustain,
And pour our blood where *thine* hath flow'd,
Too blest if not in vain!

We give thee holy rite,
Slow knell, and chaunted strain.
—For those that fall to-morrow night,
May be left no funeral-train.

Again, when trumpets wake,
We must brace our armour on;
But a deeper note *thy* sleep must break—
—Thou to thy rest art gone!

Happier in *this* than all,
That, now thy race is run,
Upon thy name no stain may fall,
Thy work hath well been done!

Elm. "Thy work hath well been done!"—so thou may'st rest!
—There is a solemn lesson in those words—
But now I may not pause. [*Exit* ELMINA.

SCENE III.—*A Street in the City.*

HERNANDEZ—GONZALEZ.

Her. Would they not hear?
Gon. They heard, as one that stands
By the cold grave which hath but newly closed
O'er his last friend doth hear some passer-by
Bid him be comforted!—Their hearts have died
Within them!—We must perish, not as those
That fall when battle's voice doth shake the hills,
And peal through heaven's great arch, but silently,
And with a wasting of the spirit down,
A quenching, day by day, of some bright spark,
Which lit us on our toils!—Reproach me not;
My soul is darken'd with a heavy cloud—
—Yet fear not I shall yield!
Her. Breathe not the word,
Save in proud scorn!—Each bitter day o'erpass'd
By slow endurance, is a triumph won
For Spain's red cross. And be of trusting heart!
A few brief hours, and those that turn'd away

In cold despondence, shrinking from your voice,
May crowd around their leader, and demand
To be array'd for battle. We must watch
For the swift impulse, and await its time,
As the bark waits the ocean's. You have chosen
To kindle up their souls, an hour, perchance,
When they were weary; they had cast aside
Their arms to slumber; or a knell, just then,
With its deep hollow tone, had made the blood
Creep shuddering through their veins; or they had caught
A glimpse of some new meteor, and shaped forth
Strange omens from its blaze.

Gon. Alas! the cause
Lies deeper in their misery!—I have seen,
In my night's course through this beleaguer'd city,
Things whose remembrance doth not pass away
As vapours from the mountains.—There were some,
That sat beside their dead, with eyes wherein
Grief had ta'en place of sight, and shut out all
But its own ghastly object. To my voice
Some answer'd with a fierce and bitter laugh,
As men whose agonies were made to pass
The bounds of sufferance, by some reckless word,
Dropt from the light of spirit.—Others lay—
—Why should I tell thee, father! how despair
Can bring the lofty brow of manhood down
Unto the very dust?—And yet for this,
Fear not that I embrace my doom—Oh God!
That 'twere *my* doom alone!—with less of fix'd
And solemn fortitude.—Lead on, prepare
The holiest rites of faith, that I by them
Once more may consecrate my sword, my life;

—But what are these?—Who hath not dearer lives
Twined with his own?—I shall be lonely soon—
Childless!—Heaven wills it so. Let us begone.
Perchance before the shrine my heart may beat
With a less troubled motion.

[*Exeunt* GONZALEZ *and* HERNANDEZ.

SCENE IV.—*A Tent in the Moorish Camp.*

ABDULLAH—ALPHONSO—CARLOS.

Abd. These are bold words: but hast thou look'd on death,
Fair stripling?—On thy cheek and sunny brow
Scarce fifteen summers of their laughing course
Have left light traces. If thy shaft hath pierced
The ibex of the mountains, if thy step
Hath climb'd some eagle's nest, and thou hast made
His nest thy spoil, 'tis much!—And fear'st thou not
The leader of the mighty?

Alph. I have been
Rear'd amongst fearless men, and 'midst the rocks
And the wild hills, whereon my fathers fought
And won their battles. There are glorious tales
Told of their deeds, and I have learn'd them all.
How should I fear thee, Moor?

Abd. So, thou hast seen
Fields, where the combat's roar hath died away
Into the whispering breeze, and where wild flowers
Bloom o'er forgotten graves!—But know'st thou aught
Of those, where sword from crossing sword strikes fire,

And leaders are borne down, and rushing steeds
Trample the life from out the mighty hearts
That ruled the storm so late?—Speak not of death
Till thou hast look'd on such.

Alph. I was not born
A shepherd's son, to dwell with pipe and crook,
And peasant men, amidst the lowly vales;
Instead of ringing clarions, and bright spears,
And crested knights!—I am of princely race;
And, if my father would have heard my suit,
I tell thee, infidel, that long ere now,
I should have seen how lances meet, and swords
Do the field's work.

Abd. Boy!—know'st thou there are sights
A thousand times more fearful?—Men may die
Full proudly, when the skies and mountains ring
To battle-horn and tecbir.* But not all
So pass away in glory. There are those,
'Midst the dead silence of pale multitudes,
Led forth in fetters—dost thou mark me, boy?
To take their last look of th' all gladdening sun,
And bow, perchance, the stately head of youth
Unto the death of shame!—Hadst thou seen this——

Alph. (*to Carlos.*) Sweet brother, God is with us—
fear thou not!
We have had heroes for our sires:—this man
Should not behold us tremble.

Abd. There are means
To tame the loftiest natures. Yet, again
I ask thee, wilt thou, from beneath the walls

* *Tecbir*, the war-cry of the Moors and Arabs.

Sue to thy sire for life?—or would'st thou die
With this thy brother?

Alph. Moslem!—on the hills,
Around my father's castle, I have heard
The mountain-peasants, as they dress'd the vines,
Or drove the goats, by rock and torrent, home,
Singing their ancient songs; and these were all
Of the Cid Campeador; and how his sword
Tizona,[3] clear'd its way through turban'd hosts,
And captured Afric's kings, and how he won
Valencia from the Moor[4]—I will not shame
The blood we draw from him!

[*A Moorish soldier enters.*

Sol. Valencia's lord
Sends messengers, my chief.

Abd. Conduct them hither.

[*The soldier goes out and re-enters with* ELMINA, *disguised, and an attendant.*

Car. (*springing forward to the attendant.*) Oh! take me hence, Diego! take me hence
With thee, that I may see my mother's face
At morning when I wake. Here dark-brow'd men
Frown strangely, with their cruel eyes, upon us.
Take me with thee, for thou art good and kind,
And well I know thou lov'st me, my Diego!

Abd. Peace, boy!—What tidings, Christian, from thy lord?
Is he grown humbler?—doth he set the lives
Of these fair nurslings at a city's worth?

Alph. (*rushing forward impatiently.*) Say not he doth!—Yet wherefore art thou here?
If it be so, I could weep burning tears

For very shame! If this *can* be, return!
Tell him, of all his wealth, his battle-spoils,
I will but ask a war-horse and a sword,
And that beside him in the mountain-chase,
And in his halls, and at his stately feasts,
My place shall be no more!—but, no!—I wrong,
I wrong my father! Moor, believe it not,
He is a champion of the cross and Spain,
Sprung from the Cid!—and I, too, I can die
As a warrior's high-born child!

Elm. Alas, alas!
And would'st thou die, thus early die, fair boy?
What hath life done to thee, that thou should'st cast
Its flower away, in very scorn of heart,
Ere yet the blight be come?

Alph. That voice doth sound——

Abd. Stranger, who art thou?—this is mockery! speak!

Elm. (*throwing off a mantle and helmet, and embracing her sons.*) My boys! whom I have rear'd through many hours
Of silent joys and sorrows, and deep thoughts
Untold and unimagined; let me die
With you, now I have held you to my heart,
And seen once more the faces, in whose light
My soul hath lived for years!

Car. Sweet mother! now
Thou shalt not leave us more.

Abd. Enough of this!
Woman! what seek'st thou here? How hast thou dared
To front the mighty thus amidst his hosts?

Elm. Think'st thou there dwells no courage but in breasts
That set their mail against the ringing spears,
When helmets are struck down? Thou little know'st
Of nature's marvels. Chief, my heart is nerved
To make its way through things which warrior men,
Ay, they that master death by field or flood,
Would look on, ere they braved!—I have no thought,
No sense of fear! Thou'rt mighty! but a soul
Wound up like mine is mightier, in the power
Of that one feeling pour'd through all its depths,
Than monarchs with their hosts! Am I not come
To die with these my children?

Abd. Doth thy faith
Bid thee do this, fond Christian? Hast thou not
The means to save them?

Elm. I have prayers, and tears,
And agonies!—and he, my God; the God
Whose hand, or soon or late, doth find its hour
To bow the crested head—hath made these things
Most powerful in a world where all must learn
That one deep language, by the storm call'd forth
From the bruis'd reeds of earth! For thee, perchance,
Affliction's chastening lesson hath not yet
Been laid upon thy heart, and thou may'st love
To see the creatures, by its might brought low,
Humbled before thee.

[*She throws herself at his feet.*

Conqueror, I can kneel!
I, that drew birth from princes, bow myself
E'en to thy feet! Call in thy chiefs, thy slaves

If this will swell thy triumph, to behold
The blood of kings, of heroes, thus abased!
Do this, but spare my sons!
Alph. (*attempting to raise her.*) Thou should'st not kneel
Unto this infidel! Rise, rise, my mother!
This sight doth shame our house!
Abd. Thou daring boy!
They that in arms have taught thy father's land
How chains are worn, shall school that haughty mien
Unto another language.
Elm. Peace, my son!
Have pity on my heart!—Oh, pardon, chief!
He is of noble blood. Hear, hear me yet!
Are there no lives through which the shafts of Heaven
May reach your soul? He that loves aught on earth,
Dares far too much, if he be merciless!
Is it for those, whose frail mortality
Must one day strive alone with God and death,
To shut their souls against th' appealing voice
Of nature, in her anguish?—warrior, man,
To you, too, ay, and haply with your hosts,
By thousands and ten thousands marshall'd round,
And your strong armour on, shall come that stroke
Which the lance wards not!—where shall your high heart
Find refuge then, if in the day of might
Woe hath lain prostrate, bleeding at your feet,
And you have pitied not?
Abd. These are vain words.
Elm. Have you no children?—fear you not to bring

The lightning on their heads?—In your own land
Doth no fond mother, from the tents beneath
Your native palms, look o'er the deserts out,
To greet your homeward step?—You have not yet
Forgot so utterly her patient love;—
For is not woman's in all climes the same?
That you should scorn *my* prayer!—O Heaven! his eye
Doth wear no mercy!

Abd. Then it mocks you not.
I have swept o'er the mountains of your land,
Leaving my traces, as the visitings
Of storms upon them! Shall I now be stay'd?
Know, unto me it were as light a thing
In this my course, to quench your children's lives,
As, journeying through a forest, to break off
The young wild branches that obstruct the way
With their green sprays and leaves.

Elm. Are there such hearts
Amongst thy works, O God?

Abd. Kneel not to me.
Kneel to your lord! on his resolves doth hang
His children's doom. He may be lightly won
By a few bursts of passionate tears and words.

Elm. (*rising indignantly.*) Speak not of noble men!—He bears a soul
Stronger than love or death.

Alph. (*with exultation.*) I knew 'twas thus!
He could not fail!

Elm. There is no mercy, none,
On this cold earth!—To strive with such a world,
Hearts should be void of love!—We will go hence,

My children! we are summon'd. Lay your heads,
In their young radiant beauty, once again
To rest upon this bosom. He that dwells
Beyond the clouds which press us darkly round,
Will yet have pity, and before his face
We three will stand together! Moslem! now
Let the stroke fall at once!

Abd. 'Tis thine own will.
These might e'en yet be spared.

Elm. *Thou* wilt not spare!
And he beneath whose eye their childhood grew,
And in whose paths they sported, and whose ear
From their first lisping accents caught the sound
Of that word—*Father*—once a name of love—
Is——Men shall call him *steadfast.*

Abd. Hath the blast
Of sudden trumpets ne'er at dead of night,
When the land's watchers fear'd no hostile step,
Startled the slumberers from their dreamy world,
In cities, whose heroic lords have been
Steadfast as thine?

Elm. There's meaning in thine eye,
More than thy words.

Abd. (*pointing to the city.*) Look to yon towers and walls!
Think you no hearts within their limits pine,
Weary of hopeless warfare, and prepared
To burst the feeble links which bind them still
Unto endurance?

Elm. Thou hast said too well.
But what of this?

Abd. Then there are those, to whom

The prophet's armies not as foes would pass
Yon gates, but as deliverers. Might they not
In some still hour, when weariness takes rest,
Be won to welcome us?—Your children's steps
May yet bound lightly through their father's halls!
Alph. (*indignantly.*) Thou treacherous Moor!
Elm. Let me not thus be tried
Beyond all strength, oh, Heaven!
Abd. Now, 'tis for *thee*,
Thou Christian mother! on thy sons to pass
The sentence—life or death!—the price is set
On their young blood, and rests within thy hands.
Alph. Mother! thou tremblest!
Abd. Hath thy heart resolved?
Elm. (*covering her face with her hands.*) My boy's
proud eye is on me, and the things
Which rush in stormy darkness through my soul,
Shrink from his glance. I cannot answer *here*.
Abd. Come forth. We'll commune elsewhere.
Car. (*to his mother.*) Wilt thou go?
Oh! let me follow thee!
Elm. Mine own fair child!
Now that thine eyes have pour'd once more on mine
The light of their young smile, and thy sweet voice
Hath sent its gentle music through my soul,
And I have felt the twining of thine arms—
How shall I leave thee?
Abd. Leave him, as 'twere but
For a brief slumber, to behold his face
At morning, with the sun's.
Alph. Thou hast no look
For me, my mother!

Elm. Oh! that I should live
To say, I *dare* not look on thee!—Farewell,
My first-born, fare thee well!
Alph. Yet, yet beware!
It were a grief more heavy on thy soul,
That I should blush for thee, than o'er my grave
That thou should'st proudly weep!
Abd. Away! we trifle here. The night wanes fast.
Come forth!
Elm. Once more embrace! My sons, farewell!
[*Exeunt* ABDULLAH *with* ELMINA *and her Attendant.*
Alph. Hear me yet once, my mother!—Art thou gone?
But one word more!
[*He rushes out, followed by* CARLOS.

SCENE V.—*The Garden of a Palace in Valencia.*

XIMENA, THERESA.

Ther. Stay yet awhile. A purer air doth rove
Here through the myrtles whispering, and the limes,
And shaking sweetness from the orange boughs,
Than waits you in the city.
Xim. There are those
In their last need, and on their bed of death,
At which no hand doth minister but mine
That wait me in the city. Let us hence.
Ther. You have been wont to love the music made

By founts, and rustling foliage, and soft winds,
Breathing of citron-groves. And will you turn
From these to scenes of death?
Xim. To me the voice
Of summer, whispering through young flowers and leaves,
Now speaks too deep a language! and of all
Its dreamy and mysterious melodies,
The breathing soul is sadness!—I have felt
That summons through my spirit, after which
The hues of earth are changed, and all her sounds
Seem fraught with secret warnings.—There is cause
That I should bend my footsteps to the scenes
Where Death is busy, taming warrior-hearts,
And pouring winter through the fiery blood,
And fett'ring the strong arm!—For now no sigh
In the dull air, nor floating cloud in heaven,
No, not the lightest murmur of a leaf,
But of his angel's silent coming bears
Some token to my soul.—But nought of this
Unto my mother!—These are awful hours!
And on their heavy steps afflictions crowd
With such dark pressure, there is left no room
For one grief more.
Ther. Sweet lady, talk not thus!
Your eye this morn doth wear a calmer light,
There's more of life in its clear trem'lous ray
Than I have mark'd of late. Nay, go not yet;
Rest by this fountain, where the laurels dip
Their glossy leaves. A fresher gale doth spring
From the transparent waters, dashing round

Their silvery spray, with a sweet voice of coolness,
O'er the pale glistening marble. 'Twill call up
Faint bloom, if but a moment's, to your cheek.
Rest here, ere you go forth, and I will sing
The melody you love.

THERESA *sings.*

Why is the Spanish maiden's grave
So far from her own bright land?
The sunny flowers that o'er it wave
Were sown by no kindred hand.

'Tis not the orange-bough that sends
Its breath on the sultry air,
'Tis not the myrtle-stem that bends
To the breeze of evening there!

But the rose of Sharon's eastern bloom
By the silent dwelling fades,
And none but strangers pass the tomb
Which the palm of Judah shades.

The lowly Cross, with flowers o'ergrown,
Marks well that place of rest;
But who hath graved, on its mossy stone,
A sword, a helm, a crest?

These are the trophies of a chief,
A lord of the axe and spear!
—Some blossom pluck'd, some faded leaf,
Should grace a maiden's bier!

Scorn not her tomb—deny not her
The honours of the brave!
O'er that forsaken sepulchre,
Banner and plume might wave.

She bound the steel, in battle tried,
Her fearless heart above,
And stood with brave men, side by side,
In the strength and faith of love!

That strength prevail'd—that faith was bless'd!
True was the javelin thrown,
Yet pierced it not her warrior's breast:
She met it with her own!

And nobly won, where heroes fell
In arms for the holy shrine,
A death which saved what she loved so well,
And a grave in Palestine.

Then let the rose of Sharon spread
Its breast to the glowing air,
And the palm of Judah lift its head,
Green and immortal there!

And let yon grey stone, undefaced,
With its trophy mark the scene,
Telling the pilgrim of the waste,
Where Love and Death have been.

Xim. Those notes were wont to make my heart
beat quick,

As at a voice of victory; but to-day
The spirit of the song is changed, and seems
All mournful. Oh! that, ere my early grave
Shuts out the sunbeam, I might hear one peal
Of the Castilian trumpet, ringing forth
Beneath my father's banner!—In that sound
Were life to you, sweet brothers!—But for me—
Come on—our tasks await us. They who know
Their hours are number'd out, have little time
To give the vague and slumberous languor way,
Which doth steal o'er them in the breath of flowers,
And whisper of soft winds.

[ELMINA *enters hurriedly.*

Elm. The air will calm my spirit, ere yet I meet
His eye, which must be met.—Thou here, Ximena!

[*She starts back on seeing* XIMENA.

Xim. Alas! my mother! In that hurrying step
And troubled glance I read——

Elm. (*wildly.*) Thou read'st it not!
Why, who would live, if unto mortal eye
The things lay glaring, which within our hearts
We treasure up for God's?—Thou read'st it not!
I say, thou canst not!—There's not one on earth
Shall know the thoughts, which for themselves have made
And kept dark places in the very breast
Whereon he hath laid his slumber, till the hour
When the graves open!

Xim. Mother! what is this?
Alas! your eye is wandering, and your cheek
Flush'd, as with fever! To your woes the night
Hath brought no rest.

Elm. Rest!—who should rest?—not he
That holds one earthly blessing to his heart
Nearer than life!—No! if this world have aught
Of bright or precious, let not him who calls
Such things his own, take rest!—Dark spirits keep watch,
And they to whom fair honour, chivalrous fame,
Were as heaven's air, the vital element
Wherein they breathed, may wake, and find their souls
Made marks for human scorn!—Will they bear on
With life struck down, and thus disrobed of all
Its glorious drapery?—Who shall tell us this?
—Will *he* so bear it?

Xim. Mother! let us kneel
And blend our hearts in prayer!—What else is left
To mortals when the dark hour's might is on them?
—Leave us, Theresa.—Grief like this doth find
Its balm in solitude. [*Exit* THERESA.
My mother! peace
Is heaven's benignant answer to the cry
Of wounded spirits. Wilt thou kneel with me?

Elm. Away! 'tis but for souls unstain'd, to wear
Heaven's tranquil image on their depths.—The stream
Of my dark thoughts, all broken by the storm,
Reflects but clouds and lightnings!—Didst thou speak
Of peace?—'tis fled from earth!—but there is joy!
Wild, troubled joy! And who shall know, my child!
It is not happiness?—Why, our own hearts
Will keep the secret close!—Joy, joy! if but

To leave this desolate city, with its dull
Slow knells and dirges, and to breathe again
Th' untainted mountain-air!—But hush! the trees,
The flowers, the waters, must hear nought of this!
They are full of voices, and will whisper things——
—We'll speak of it no more.

Xim. Oh! pitying Heaven!
This grief doth shake her reason!

Elm. (*starting.*) Hark! a step!
'Tis—'tis thy father's!—come away—not now—
He must not see us now!

Xim. Why should this be?

[GONZALEZ *enters, and detains* ELMINA.

Gon. Elmina, dost thou shun me? —Have we not,
E'en from the hopeful and the sunny time
When youth was as a glory round our brows,
Held on through life together?—And is this,
When eve is gathering round us, with the gloom
Of stormy clouds, a time to part our steps
Upon the darkening wild?

Elm. (*coldly.*) There needs not this.
Why should'st thou think I shunn'd thee?

Gon. Should the love
That shone o'er many years, th' unfading love,
Whose only change hath been from gladd'ning smiles
To mingling sorrows and sustaining strength,
Thus lightly be forgotten?

Elm. Speak'st *thou* thus?
—I have knelt before thee with that very plea,
When it avail'd me not!—But there are things
Whose very breathings from the soul erase

All record of past love, save the chill sense,
Th' unquiet memory of its wasted faith,
And vain devotedness!—Ay! they that fix
Affection's perfect trust on aught of earth,
Have many a dream to start from!

Gon. This is but
The wildness and the bitterness of grief,
Ere yet the unsettled heart hath closed its long
Impatient conflicts with a mightier power,
Which makes all conflict vain.
——Hark! was there not
A sound of distant trumpets, far beyond
The Moorish tents, and of another tone
Than th' Afric horn, Ximena?

Xim. Oh, my father!
I know that horn too well.—'Tis but the wind,
Which, with a sudden rising, bears its deep
And savage war-note from us, wafting it
O'er the far hills.

Gon. Alas! this woe must be!
I do not shake my spirit from its height,
So startling it with hope!—But the dread hour
Shall be met bravely still. I can keep down
Yet for a little while—and Heaven will ask
No more—the passionate workings of my heart
—And thine—Elmina?

Elm. 'Tis—I am prepared.
I *have* prepared for all.

Gon. Oh, well I knew
Thou would'st not fail me!—Not in vain my soul,
Upon thy faith and courage, hath built up
Unshaken trust.

Elm. (*wildly.*) Away!—thou know'st me not!
Man dares too far, his rashness would invest
This our mortality with an attribute
Too high and awful, boasting that he knows
One human heart!

Gon. These are wild words, but yet
I will not doubt thee!—Hast thou not been found
Noble in all things, pouring thy soul's light
Undimm'd o'er every trial?—And, as our fates,
So must our names be, undivided!—Thine,
I' th' record of a warrior's life, shall find
Its place of stainless honour.—By his side—

Elm. May this be borne?—How much of agony
Hath the heart room for?—Speak to me in wrath
—I can endure it!—But no gentle words!
No words of love! no praise!—Thy sword might slay,
And be more merciful!

Gon. Wherefore art thou thus?
Elmina, my beloved!

Elm. No more of love!
—Have I not said there's that within my heart,
Whereon it falls as living fire would fall
Upon an unclosed wound?

Gon. Nay, lift thine eyes,
That I may read *their* meaning!

Elm. Never more
With a free soul—What have I said?—'twas nought!
Take thou no heed! The words of wretchedness
Admit not scrutiny. Would'st thou mark the speech
Of troubled dreams?

Gon. I have seen thee in the hour
Of thy deep spirit's joy, and when the breath

Of grief hung chilling round thee; in all change,
Bright health and drooping sickness; hope and fear;
Youth and decline; but never yet, Elmina,
Ne'er hath thine eye till now shrunk back perturb'd
With shame or dread, from mine!

Elm. Thy glance doth search
A wounded heart too deeply.

Gon. Hast thou there
Aught to conceal?

Elm. Who hath not?

Gon. Till this hour
Thou never hadst!—Yet hear me!—by the free
And unattainted fame which wraps the dust
Of thine heroic fathers—

Elm. This to me!
—Bring your inspiring war-notes, and your sounds
Of festal music round a dying man!
Will his heart echo them?—But if thy words
Were spells, to call up, with each lofty tone,
The grave's most awful spirits, they would stand
Powerless, before my anguish!

Gon. Then, by her,
Who there looks on thee in the purity
Of her devoted youth, and o'er whose name
No blight must fall, and whose pale cheek must ne'er
Burn with that deeper tinge, caught painfully
From the quick feeling of dishonour,—Speak!
Unfold this mystery!—By thy sons—

Elm. My sons!
And canst *thou* name them?

Gon. Proudly!—Better far
They died with all the promise of their youth,

And the fair honour of their house upon them,
Than that, with manhood's high and passionate soul,
To fearful strength unfolded, they should live,
Barr'd from the lists of crested chivalry,
And pining, in the silence of a woe,
Which from the heart shuts daylight—o'er the shame
Of those who gave them birth!—But *thou* could'st ne'er
Forget their lofty claims!

Elm. (*wildly.*) 'Twas but for them!
'Twas for them only!—Who shall dare arraign
Madness of crime?—And He who made us, knows
There are dark moments of all hearts and lives,
Which bear down reason!

Gon. Thou, whom I have loved
With such high trust as o'er our nature threw
A glory scarce allow'd;—what hast thou done?
—Ximena, go thou hence!

Elm. No, no! my child!
There's pity in thy look!—All other eyes
Are full of wrath and scorn!—Oh! leave me not!

Gon. That I should live to see thee thus abased!
—Yet speak?—What hast thou done?

Elm. Look to the gate!
Thou'rt worn with toil—but take no rest to-night!
The western gate!—Its watchers have been won—
The Christian city hath been bought and sold!—
They will admit the Moor!

Gon. They have been won!
Brave men and tried so long!—Whose work was this?

Elm. Think'st thou all hearts like thine ?—Can
mothers stand
To see their children perish ?
Gon. Then the guilt
Was thine ?
Elm. Shall mortal dare to call it guilt ?
I tell thee, Heaven, which made all holy things,
Made nought more holy than the boundless love
Which fills a mother's heart !—I say, 'tis woe
Enough, with such an aching tenderness,
To love aught earthly !—and in vain ! in vain !
—We are press'd down too sorely !
Gon. (*in a low desponding voice.*) Now my life
Is struck to worthless ashes !—In my soul
Suspicion hath ta'en root. The nobleness
Henceforth is blotted from all human brows ;
And fearful power, a dark and troublous gift,
Almost like prophecy, is pour'd upon me,
To read the guilty secrets in each eye
That once look'd bright with truth !
—Why, then, I have gain'd
What men call wisdom !—A new sense, to which
All tales that speak of high fidelity,
And holy courage, and proud honour, tried,
Search'd, and found steadfast, even to martyrdom,
Are food for mockery !—Why should I not cast
From my thinn'd locks the wearing helm at once,
And in the heavy sickness of my soul
Throw the sword down for ever ?—Is there aught
In all this world of gilded hollowness,
Now the bright hues drop off its loveliest things,
Worth striving for again ?

Xim. Father! look up!
Turn unto me, thy child!
Gon. Thy face is fair;
And hath been unto me, in other days,
As morning to the journeyer of the deep;
But now—'tis too like hers!
Elm. (*falling at his feet.*) Woe, shame and woe,
Are on me in their might!—forgive, forgive!
Gon. (*starting up.*) Doth the Moor deem that *I* have part, or share,
Or counsel in this vileness?—Stay me not!
Let go thy hold—'tis powerless on me now—
I linger here, while treason is at work!
[*Exit* GONZALEZ.
Elm. Ximena, dost *thou* scorn me?
Xim. I have found
In mine own heart too much of feebleness,
Hid, beneath many foldings, from all eyes
But His whom nought can blind, to dare do aught
But pity thee, dear mother!
Elm. Blessings light
On thy fair head, my gentle child, for this!
Thou kind and merciful!—My soul is faint—
Worn with long strife!—Is there aught else to do,
Or suffer, ere we die?—Oh God! my sons!
—I have betray'd them!—All their innocent blood
Is on my soul!
Xim. How shall I comfort thee?
—Oh! hark! what sounds come deepening on the wind,
So full of solemn hope!

(A procession of Nuns passes across the Scene, bearing relics, and chanting.)

CHANT.

A sword is on the land!
He that bears down young tree and glorious flower,
Death is gone forth, he walks the wind in power:
Where is the warrior's hand?
Our steps are in the shadows of the grave,
Hear us, we perish! Father, hear and save!

If, in the days of song,
The days of gladness, we have call'd on thee,
When mirthful voices rang from sea to sea,
And joyous hearts were strong;
Now that alike the feeble and the brave
Must cry, "We perish!"—Father, hear and save!

The days of song are fled!
The winds come loaded, wafting dirge-notes by,
But they that linger soon unmourn'd must die;—
The dead weep not the dead!—
Wilt thou forsake us 'midst the stormy wave?
We sink, we perish!—Father, hear and save!

Helmet and lance are dust!
Is not the strong man wither'd from our eye?
The arm struck down that held our banners high?—
Thine is our spirits' trust!
Look through the gath'ring shadows of the grave!
Do we not perish?—Father, hear and save!

[HERNANDEZ *enters.*

Elm. Why com'st thou, man of vengeance?—
What have I
To do with thee?—Am I not bow'd enough?—
Thou art no mourner's comforter!

Her. Thy lord
Hath sent me unto thee. Till this day's task
Be closed, thou daughter of the feeble heart!
He bids thee seek him not, but lay thy ways
Before Heaven's altar, and in penitence
Make thy soul's peace with God.

Elm. Till this day's task
Be closed!—there is strange triumph in thine eyes—
Is it that I have fall'n from that high place
Whereon I stood in fame?—But I can feel
A wild and bitter pride in thus being past
The power of thy dark glance!—My spirit now
Is wound about by one sole mighty grief;
Thy scorn hath lost its sting. Thou may'st reproach—

Her. I come not to reproach thee. Heaven doth work
By many agencies; and in its hour
There is no insect which the summer breeze
From the green leaf shakes trembling, but may serve
Its deep unsearchable purposes, as well
As the great ocean, or th' eternal fires
Pent in earth's caves!—Thou hast but speeded that,
Which, in th' infatuate blindness of thy heart,
Thou would'st have trampled o'er all holy ties
But to avert one day!

Elm. My senses fail—

Thou said'st—speak yet again—I could not catch
The meaning of thy words.
Her. E'en now thy lord
Hath sent our foes defiance. On the walls
He stands in conference with the boastful Moor,
And awful strength is with him. Through the blood
Which this day must be pour'd in sacrifice
Shall Spain be free. On all her olive-hills
Shall men set up the battle-sign of fire,
And round its blaze, at midnight, keep the sense
Of vengeance wakeful in each other's hearts
E'en with thy children's tale!
Xim. Peace, father! peace!
Behold she sinks!—the storm hath done its work
Upon the broken reed. Oh! lend thine aid
To bear her hence. [*They lead her away.*

SCENE VI.—*A Street in Valencia. Several Groups of Citizens and Soldiers, many of them lying on the steps of a church. Arms scattered on the ground around them.*

An Old Cit. The air is sultry, as with thunder-clouds.
I left my desolate home, that I might breathe
More freely in heaven's face, but my heart feels
With this hot gloom o'erburden'd. I have now
No sons to tend me. Which of you, kind friends,
Will bring the old man water from the fount,
To moisten his parch'd lip? [*A citizen goes out.*
2d Cit. This wasting siege,

Good Father Lopez, hath gone hard with you!
'Tis sad to hear no voices through the house,
Once peopled with fair sons!
3d Cit. Why, better thus,
Than to be haunted with their famish'd cries,
E'en in your very dreams!
Old Cit. Heaven's will be done!
These are dark times! I have not been alone
In my affliction.
3d Cit. (*with bitterness.*) Why, we have but this thought
Left for our gloomy comfort!—And 'tis well!
Ay, let the balance be awhile struck even
Between the noble's palace and the hut,
Where the worn peasant sickens!—They that bear
The humble dead unhonour'd to their homes,
Pass now i' th' streets no lordly bridal train
With its exulting music; and the wretch
Who on the marble steps of some proud hall
Flings himself down to die, in his last need
And agony of famine, doth behold
No scornful guests, with their long purple robes,
To the banquet sweeping by. Why, this is just!
These are the days when pomp is made to feel
Its human mould!
4th Cit. Heard you last night the sound
Of Saint Iago's bell?—How sullenly
From the great tower it peal'd!
5th Cit. Ay, and tis said
No mortal hand was near when so it seem'd
To shake the midnight streets.
Old Cit. Too well I know

The sound of coming fate!—'Tis ever thus
When Death is on his way to make it night
In the Cid's ancient house.[5]—Oh! there are things
In this strange world of which we've all to learn
When its dark bounds are pass'd.—Yon bell, untouch'd
(Save by the hands we see not), still doth speak—
When of that line some stately head is mark'd,—
With a wild hollow peal, at dead of night,
Rocking Valencia's towers. I've heard it oft,
Nor known its warning false.

4th Cit. And will our chief
Buy with the price of his fair children's blood
A few more days of pining wretchedness
For this forsaken city?

Old Cit. Doubt it not!
—But with that ransom he may purchase still
Deliverance for the land!—And yet 'tis sad
To think that such a race, with all its fame,
Should pass away!—For she, his daughter too,
Moves upon earth as some bright thing whose time
To sojourn there is short.

5th Cit. Then woe for us
When she is gone!—Her voice—the very sound
Of her soft step was comfort, as she moved
Through the still house of mourning!—Who like her
Shall give us hope again?

Old Cit. Be still!—she comes,
And with a mien how changed!—A hurrying step,
And a flush'd cheek!—What may this bode?—Be still!

XIMENA *enters, with Attendants carrying a Banner.*

Xim. Men of Valencia! in an hour like this,
What do ye here?
A Cit. We die!
Xim. Brave men die *now*
Girt for the toil, as travellers suddenly
By the dark night o'ertaken on their way!
These days require such death!—It is too much
Of luxury for our wild and angry times,
To fold the mantle round us, and to sink
From life, as flowers that shut up silently,
When the sun's heat doth scorch them! Hear ye not?
A Cit. Lady! what would'st thou with us?
Xim. Rise and arm!
E'en now the children of your chief are led
Forth by the Moor to perish!—Shall this be,
Shall the high sound of such a name be hush'd,
I' th' land to which for ages it hath been
A battle-word, as 'twere some passing note
Of shepherd-music?—Must this work be done,
And ye lie pining here, as men in whom
The pulse which God hath made for noble thought
Can so be thrill'd no longer?
Cit. 'Tis e'en so!
Sickness, and toil, and grief, have breathed upon us,
Our hearts beat faint and low.
Xim. Are ye so poor
Of soul, my countrymen! that ye can draw
Strength from no deeper source than that which sends
The red blood mantling through the joyous veins,
And gives the fleet step wings?—Why, how have age
And sens'tive womanhood ere now endured,

Through pangs of searching fire, in some proud cause,
Blessing that agony? Think ye the Power
Which bore them nobly up, as if to teach
The torturer where eternal Heaven had set
Bounds to his sway, was earthy, of this earth—
This dull mortality?—Nay, then look on me!
Death's touch hath mark'd me, and I stand amongst you,
As one whose place, i' th' sunshine of your world,
Shall soon be left to fill!—I say, the breath
Of th' incense, floating through yon fane, shall scarce
Pass from your path before me! But even now,
I 've that within me, kindling through the dust,
Which from all time hath made high deeds its voice
And token to the nations;—Look on me!
Why hath Heaven pour'd forth courage, as a flame
Wasting the womanish heart, which must be still'd
Yet sooner for its swift consuming brightness,
If not to shame your doubt, and your despair,
And your soul's torpor?—Yet, arise and arm!
It may not be too late.

A Cit. Why, what are we,
To cope with hosts?—Thus faint, and worn, and few,
O'ernumber'd and forsaken, is't for us
To stand against the mighty?

Xim. And for whom
Hath He, who shakes the mighty with a breath
From their high places, made the fearfulness,
And ever-wakeful presence of his power,
To the pale startled earth most manifest,
But for the weak?—Was't for the helm'd and crown'd

That suns were stay'd at noonday?—Stormy seas
As a rill parted?—Mail'd archangels sent
To wither up the strength of kings with death?
—I tell you, if these marvels have been done,
'Twas for the wearied and th' oppress'd of men.
They needed such!—And generous faith hath power
By her prevailing spirit, e'en yet to work
Deliverances, whose tale shall live with those
Of the great elder-time!—Be of good heart!
Who is forsaken?—He that gives the thought
A place within his breast!—'Tis not for you.
—Know ye this banner?

Cits. (*murmuring to each other.*) Is she not inspired?

Doth not Heaven call us by her fervent voice?

Xim. Know ye this banner?

Cit. 'Tis the Cid's.

Xim. The Cid's!

Who breathes that name but in th' exulting tone
Which the heart rings to?—Why, the very wind,
As it swells out the noble standard's fold,
Hath a triumphant sound!—The Cid's!—it moved
Even as a sign of victory through the land,
From the free skies ne'er stooping to a foe!

Old Cit. Can ye still pause, my brethren? Oh! that youth
Through this worn frame were kindling once again!

Xim. Ye linger still? Upon this very air,
He that was born in happy hour for Spain,[6]
Pour'd forth his conquering spirit! 'Twas the breeze
From your own mountains which came down to wave

This banner of his battles, as it droop'd
Above the champion's deathbed. Nor even then
Its tale of glory closed. They made no moan
O'er the dead hero, and no dirge was sung,
But the deep tambour and shrill horn of war
Told when the mighty pass'd! They wrapt him not
With the pale shroud, but braced the warrior's form
In war array, and on his barbed steed,
As for a triumph, rear'd him; marching forth
In the hush'd midnight from Valencia's walls,
Beleaguer'd then, as now. All silently
The stately funeral moved. But who was he
That follow'd, charging on the tall white horse,
And with the solemn standard, broad and pale,
Waving in sheets of snowlight? And the cross,
The bloody cross, far-blazing from his shield,
And the fierce meteor-sword? They fled, they fled,
The kings of Afric, with their countless hosts,
Were dust in his red path. The scimitar
Was shiver'd as a reed;—for in that hour
The warrior-saint that keeps the watch for Spain,
Was arm'd betimes. And o'er that fiery field
The Cid's high banner stream'd all joyously,
For still its lord was there.

Cits. (*rising tumultuously.*) Even unto death
Again it shall be follow'd!

Xim. Will he see
The noble stem hewn down, the beacon-light
Which from his house for ages o'er the land
Hath shone through cloud and storm, thus quench'd at once?
Will he not aid his children in the hour

Of this their utmost peril?—Awful power
Is with the holy dead, and there are times
When the tomb hath no chain they cannot burst!
Is it a thing forgotten how he woke
From its deep rest of old; remembering Spain
In her great danger? At the night's mid-watch
How Leon started, when the sound was heard
That shook her dark and hollow-echoing streets,
As with the heavy tramp of steel-clad men,
By thousands marching through. For he had risen!
The Campeador was on his march again,
And in his arms, and follow'd by his hosts
Of shadowy spearmen. He had left the world
From which we are dimly parted, and gone forth,
And call'd his buried warriors from their sleep,
Gathering them round him to deliver Spain;
For Afric was upon her. Morning broke,
Day rush'd through clouds of battle; but at eve
Our God had triumph'd, and the rescued land
Sent up a shout of victory from the field,
That rock'd her ancient mountains.

The Cits. Arm! to arms!
On to our chief! We have strength within us yet
To die with our blood roused! Now, be the word
For the Cid's house! [*They begin to arm themselves.*

Xim. Ye know his battle song?
The old rude strain wherewith his bands went forth
To strike down Paynim swords! [*She sings.*

THE CID'S BATTLE SONG.

The Moor is on his way,
With the tambour peal and the tecbir-shout,

And the horn o'er the blue seas ringing out,
He hath marshall'd his dark array!

Shout through the vine-clad land!
That her sons on all their hills may hear,
And sharpen the point of the red wolf-spear,
And the sword for the brave man's hand!

[*The* CITIZENS *join in the song, while they continue arming themselves.*

Banners are in the field!
The chief must rise from his joyous board,
And turn from the feast ere the wine be pour'd,
And take up his father's shield!

The Moor is on his way!
Let the peasant leave his olive-ground,
And the goats roam wild through the pine-woods round!
There is nobler work to-day!

Send forth the trumpet's call!
Till the bridegroom cast the goblet down,
And the marriage-robe, and the flowery crown;
And arm in the banquet-hall!

And stay the funeral train:
Bid the chanted mass be hush'd awhile,
And the bier laid down in the holy aisle,
And the mourners girt for Spain.

[*They take up the banner and follow* XIMENA *out. Their voices are heard gradually dying away at a distance.*

Ere night must swords be red!
It is not an hour for knells and tears,
But for helmets braced, and serried spears!
To-morrow for the dead!

The Cid is in array!
His steed is barded,* his plume waves high,
His banner is up in the sunny sky,
Now, joy for the Cross to-day!

SCENE VII.—*The Walls of the City. The Plains beneath, with the Moorish Camp and Army.*

GONZALEZ—GARCIAS—HERNANDEZ.

(*A wild sound of Moorish Music heard from below.*)

Her. What notes are these in their deep mournfulness
So strangely wild?
Gar. 'Tis the shrill melody
Of the Moor's ancient death-song. Well I know
The rude barbaric sound; but, till this hour,
It seem'd not fearful.—Now, a shuddering chill
Comes o'er me with its tones.—Lo! from yon tent
They lead the noble boys!
Her. The young, and pure,

* *Barded,* caparisoned for battle.

And beautiful victims!—'Tis on things like these
We cast our hearts in wild idolatry,
Sowing the winds with hope!—Yet this is well,
Thus brightly crown'd with life's most gorgeous flowers,
And all unblemish'd, earth should offer up
Her treasures unto Heaven!

Gar. (*to* GONZALEZ.) My chief, the Moor
Hath led your children forth.

Gon. (*starting.*) Are my sons there?
I knew they could not perish; for yon Heaven
Would ne'er behold it!—Where is he that said
I was no more a father?—They look changed—
Pallid and worn, as from a prison-house!
Or is't mine eye sees dimly?—But their steps
Seem heavy, as with pain.—I hear the clank—
Oh God! their limbs are fetter'd!

Abd. (*coming forward beneath the walls.*) Christian! look
Once more upon thy children. There is yet
One moment for the trembling of the sword;
Their doom is still with thee.

Gon. Why should this man
So mock us with the semblance of our kind?
—Moor! Moor! thou dost too daringly provoke,
In thy bold cruelty, th' all-judging One,
Who visits for such things!—Hast thou no sense
Of thy frail nature?—'Twill be taught thee yet,
And darkly shall the anguish of my soul,
Darkly and heavily, pour itself on thine,
When thou shalt cry for mercy from the dust,
And be denied!

Abd. Nay, is it not thyself,
That hast no mercy and no love within thee?
These are thy sons, the nurslings of thy house;
Speak! must they live or die?

Gon. (*in violent emotion.*) Is it Heaven's will
To try the dust it kindles for a day,
With infinite agony!—How have I drawn
This chastening on my head!— They bloom'd around me,
And my heart grew too fearless in its joy,
Glorying in their bright promise!—If we fall,
Is there no pardon for our feebleness?

[HERNANDEZ, *without speaking, holds up a cross before him.*

Abd. Speak!

Gon. (*snatching the cross, and lifting it up.*) Let the earth be shaken through its depths,
But *this* must triumph!

Abd. (*coldly.*) Be it as thou wilt.
—Unsheath the scimitar! [*To his guards.*

Gar. (*to* GONZALEZ.) Away, my chief!
This is your place no longer. There are things
No human heart, though battle-proof as yours,
Unmadden'd may sustain.

Gon. Be still! I have now
No place on earth but this!

Alph. (*from beneath.*) Men! give me way,
That I may speak forth once before I die!

Gar. The princely boy!—how gallantly his brow
Wears its high nature in the face of death!

Alph. Father!

Gon. My son! my son! —Mine eldest-born!

Alph. Stay but upon the ramparts! Fear thou not
—There is good courage in me: oh! my father!
I will not shame thee!—only let me fall
Knowing thine eye looks proudly on thy child,
So shall my heart have strength.
Gon. Would, would to God,
That I might die for thee, my noble boy!
Alphonso, my fair son!
Alph. Could I have lived,
I might have been a warrior!—Now, farewell!
But look upon me still!—I will not blench
When the keen sabre flashes—Mark me well!
Mine eyelids shall not quiver as it falls,
So thou wilt look upon me!
Gar. (*to* GONZALEZ.) Nay, my lord!
We must begone!—Thou *canst* not bear it!
Gon. Peace!
—Who hath told *thee* how much man's heart can bear?
—Lend me thine arm—my brain whirls fearfully—
How thick the shades close round!—my boy! my boy!
Where art thou in this gloom?
Gar. Let us go hence!
This is a dreadful moment!
Gon. Hush!—what saidst thou?
Now let me look on him!—Dost *thou* see aught
Through the dull mist which wraps us?
Gar. I behold—
O! for a thousand Spaniards! to rush down—
Gon. Thou seest—My heart stands still to hear thee speak!

—There seems a fearful hush upon the air,
As 'twere the dead of night!
Gar. The hosts have closed
Around the spot in stillness. Through the spears,
Ranged thick and motionless, I see him not;
—But now—
Gon. He bade me keep mine eye upon him,
And all is darkness round me!—Now?
Gar. A sword,
A sword, springs upward, like a lightning burst,
Through the dark serried mass!—Its cold blue glare
Is wavering to and fro—'tis vanish'd—hark!
Gon. I heard it, yes!—I heard the dull dead sound
That heavily broke the silence!—Didst thou speak?
—I lost thy words—come nearer!
Gar. 'Twas—'tis past!—
The sword fell *then!*
Her. (*with exultation.*) Flow forth, thou noble blood!
Fount of Spain's ransom and deliverance, flow
Uncheck'd and brightly forth!—Thou kingly stream!
Blood of our heroes! blood of martyrdom!
Which through so many warrior-hearts hast pour'd
Thy fiery currents, and hast made our hills
Free, by thine own free offering!—Bathe the land,
But there thou shalt not sink!—Our very air
Shall take thy colouring, and our loaded skies
O'er th' infidel hang dark and ominous,
With battle-hues of thee!—And thy deep voice
Rising above them to the judgment-seat
Shall call a burst of gather'd vengeance down,

To sweep th' oppressor from us!—For thy wave
Hath made his guilt run o'er!

Gon. (*endeavouring to rouse himself.*) 'Tis all a dream!

There is not one—no hand on earth could harm
That fair boy's graceful head!—Why look you thus?

Abd. (*pointing to* CARLOS.) Christian! e'en yet thou hast a son!

Gon. E'en yet!

Car. My father! take me from these fearful men!
Wilt thou not save me, father?

Gon. (*attempting to unsheath his sword.*) Is the strength
From mine arm shiver'd?—Garcias, follow me!

Car. Whither, my chief?

Gon. Why, we can die as well
On yonder plain,—ay, a spear's thrust will do
The little that our misery doth require,
Sooner than e'en this anguish! Life is best
Thrown from us in such moments.

[*Voices heard at a distance.*

Her. Hush! what strain
Floats on the wind?

Gar. 'Tis the Cid's battle-song!
What marvel hath been wrought?

[*Voices approaching heard in chorus.*

The Moor is on his way!
With the tambour peal and the tecbir-shout,
And the horn o'er the blue seas ringing out;
He hath marshall'd his dark array!

[XIMENA *enters, followed by the* CITIZENS, *with the Banner.*

Xim. Is it too late?—My father, these are men
Through life and death prepared to follow thee
Beneath this banner!—Is their zeal too late?
—Oh! there's a fearful history on thy brow!
What hast thou seen?

Gar. It is not *all* too late.

Xim. My brothers!

Her. All is well.
(*To* GARCIAS.) Hush! would'st thou chill
That which hath sprung within them, as a flame
From th' altar-embers mounts in sudden brightness?
I say, 'tis not too late, ye men of Spain!
On to the rescue!

Xim. Bless me, O my father!
And I will hence, to aid thee with my prayers,
Sending my spirit with thee through the storm
Lit up by flashing swords!

Gon. (*falling upon her neck.*) Hath aught been spared?
Am I not all bereft?—Thou 'rt left me still!
Mine own, my loveliest one, thou 'rt left me still!
Farewell!—thy father's blessing, and thy God's,
Be with thee, my Ximena!

Xim. Fare thee well!
If e'er thy steps turn homeward from the field,
The voice is hush'd that still hath welcomed thee,
Think of me in thy victory!

Her. Peace! no more!
This is no time to melt our nature down
To a soft stream of tears!—Be of strong heart!
Give me the banner! Swell the song again!

The Cits. Ere night must swords be red!

It is not an hour for knells and tears,
But for helmets braced and serried spears!
—To-morrow for the dead!

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE VIII.—*Before the Altar of a Church.*

ELMINA *rises from the steps of the Altar.*

Elm. The clouds are fearful that o'erhang thy ways,
Oh, thou mysterious Heaven!—It cannot be
That I have drawn the vials of thy wrath,
To burst upon me through the lifting up
Of a proud heart, elate in happiness!
No! in my day's full noon, for me life's flowers
But wreath'd a cup of trembling; and the love,
The boundless love, my spirit was form'd to bear,
Hath ever, in its place of silence, been
A trouble and a shadow, tinging thought
With hues too deep for joy!—I never look'd
On my fair children, in their buoyant mirth
Or sunny sleep, when all the gentle air
Seem'd glowing with their quiet blessedness,
But o'er my soul there came a shudd'ring sense
Of earth, and its pale changes; ev'n like that
Which vaguely mingles with our glorious dreams—
A restless and disturbing consciousness
That the bright things must fade!—How have I shrunk
From the dull murmur of th' unquiet voice,
With its low tokens of mortality,

Till my heart fainted 'midst their smiles!—their smiles!
—Where are those glad looks now?—Could they go down,
With all their joyous light, that seem'd not earth's,
To the cold grave?—My children!—righteous Heaven!
There floats a dark remembrance o'er my brain
Of one who told me, with relentless eye,
That *this* should be the hour! [XIMENA *enters.*
Xim. They are gone forth
Unto the rescue!—strong in heart and hope,
Faithful, though few!—My mother, let thy prayers
Call on the land's good saints to lift once more
The sword and cross that sweep the field for Spain,
As in old battle; so thine arms e'en yet
May clasp thy sons!—For me, my part is done!
The flame which dimly might have linger'd yet
A little while, hath gather'd all its rays
Brightly to sink at once; and it is well!
The shadows are around me; to thy heart
Fold me, that I may die.
Elm. My child!—What dream
Is on thy soul?—Even now thine aspect wears
Life's brightest inspiration!
Xim. Death's!
Elm. Away!
Thine eye hath starry clearness; and thy cheek
Doth glow beneath it with a richer hue
Than tinged its earliest flower!
Xim. It well may be!
There are far deeper and far warmer hues

Than those which draw their colouring from the
founts
Of youth, or health, or hope.
Elm. Nay, speak not thus!
There's that about thee shining which would send
E'en through *my* heart a sunny glow of joy,
Were 't not for these sad words. The dim cold air
And solemn light, which wrap these tombs and
shrines
As a pale gleaming shroud, seem kindled up
With a young spirit of ethereal hope
Caught from thy mien!—Oh no! this is not death!
Xim. Why should not He, whose touch dissolves
our chain,
Put on his robes of beauty when he comes
As a deliverer?—He hath many forms,
They should not all be fearful!—If his call
Be but our gathering to that distant land
For whose sweet waters we have pined with thirst,
Why should not its prophetic sense be borne
Into the heart's deep stillness, with a breath
Of summer-winds, a voice of melody,
Solemn, yet lovely?—Mother, I depart!—
Be it thy comfort, in the after-days,
That thou hast seen me thus!
Elm. Distract me not
With such wild fears! Can I bear on with life
When thou art gone?—Thy voice, thy step, thy smile,
Pass'd from my path?—Alas! even now thine eye
Is changed—thy cheek is fading!
Xim. Ay, the clouds
Of the dim hour are gathering o'er my sight,

And yet I fear not, for the God of Help
Comes in that quiet darkness!—It may soothe
Thy woes, my mother! if I tell thee now
With what glad calmness I behold the veil
Falling between me and the world, wherein
My heart so ill hath rested.

Elm. Thine!

Xim. Rejoice
For her, that, when the garland of her life
Was blighted, and the springs of hope were dried,
Received her summons hence; and had no time,
Bearing the canker at th' impatient heart,
To wither, sorrowing for that gift of Heaven,
Which lent one moment of existence light,
That dimm'd the rest for ever!

Elm. How is this?
My child, what mean'st thou?

Xim. Mother! I have loved,
And been beloved!—the sunbeam of an hour,
Which gave life's hidden treasures to mine eye,
As they lay shining in their secret founts,
Went out and left them colourless.—'Tis past—
And what remains on earth?—the rainbow mist,
Through which I gazed, hath melted, and my sight
Is clear'd to look on all things as they are!—
But this is far too mournful!—Life's dark gift
Hath fall'n too early and too cold upon me!—
Therefore I would go hence!

Elm. And thou hast loved
Unknown——

Xim. Oh! pardon, pardon that I veil'd

My thoughts from thee! — But thou hadst woes enough,
And mine came o'er me when thy soul had need
Of more than mortal strength!—For I had scarce
Given the deep consciousness that I was loved
A treasure's place within my secret heart,
When earth's brief joy went from me!
'Twas at morn
I saw the warriors to their field go forth,
And he—my chosen—was there amongst the rest,
With his young, glorious brow!—I look'd again—
The strife grew dark beneath me—but his plume
Waved free above the lances. Yet again—
It had gone down! and steeds were trampling o'er
The spot to which mine eyes were riveted,
Till blinded by th' intenseness of their gaze!—
And then—at last—I hurried to the gate,
And met him there!—I met him!—on his shield,
And with his cloven helm, and shiver'd sword,
And dark hair steep'd in blood!—They bore him past—
Mother!—I saw his face!—Oh! such a death
Works fearful changes on the fair of earth,
The pride of woman's eye!
Elm. Sweet daughter, peace!
Wake not the dark remembrance; for thy frame——
Xim. There will be peace ere long. I shut my heart,
Even as a tomb, o'er that lone silent grief,
That I might spare it thee!—But now the hour
Is come when that which would have pierced thy soul

Shall be its healing balm. Oh! weep thou not,
Save with a gentle sorrow!
Elm. Must it be?
Art thou indeed to leave me?
Xim. (*exultingly.*) Be thou glad!
I say, rejoice above thy favour'd child!
Joy, for the soldier when his field is fought,
Joy, for the peasant when his vintage-task
Is closed at eve!—But most of all for her,
Who, when her life had changed its glittering robes
For the dull garb of sorrow, which doth cling
So heavily around the journeyers on,
Cast down its weight—and slept!
Elm. Alas! thine eye
Is wandering—yet how brightly!—Is this death,
Or some high wondrous vision?—Speak, my child!
How is it with thee now?
Xim. (*wildly.*) I see it still!
'Tis floating, like a glorious cloud on high,
My father's banner!—Hear'st thou not a sound?
The trumpet of Castile?—Praise, praise to Heaven!
—Now may the weary rest!—Be still!—Who calls
The night so fearful?—— [*She dies.*
Elm. No! she is not dead!—
Ximena!—speak to me!—Oh yet a tone
From that sweet voice, that I may gather in
One more remembrance of its lovely sound,
Ere the deep silence fall!—What, is all hush'd?—
No, no!—it cannot be!—How should we bear
The dark misgivings of our souls, if Heaven
Left not such beings with us?—But is this
Her wonted look?—too sad a quiet lies

On its dim fearful beauty!—Speak, Ximena!
Speak!—my heart dies within me!—She is gone,
With all her blessed smiles!—my child! my child!
Where art thou?—Where is that which answer'd me,
From thy soft-shining eyes?—Hush! doth she move?
—One light lock seem'd to tremble on her brow,
As a pulse throbb'd beneath;—'twas but the voice
Of my despair that stirr'd it!—She is gone!

[*She throws herself on the body.* GONZALEZ *enters, alone, and wounded.*

Elm. (*rising as he approaches.*) I must not *now* be scorn'd!—No, not a look,
A whisper of reproach!—Behold my woe!—
Thou canst not scorn me now!

Gon. Hast thou heard *all?*

Elm. Thy daughter on my bosom laid her head,
And pass'd away to rest.—Behold her there,
Even such as death hath made her![8]

Gon. (*bending over* XIMENA'S *body.*) Thou art gone
A little while before me, oh, my child!
Why should the traveller weep to part with those
That scarce an hour will reach their promised land
Ere he too cast his pilgrim staff away,
And spread his couch beside them?

Elm. Must it be
Henceforth enough that *once* a thing so fair
Had its bright place amongst us?—Is this all
Left for the years to come?—We will not stay!
Earth's chain each hour grows weaker.

Gon. (*still gazing upon* XIMENA.) And thou'rt laid
*To slu*mber in the shadow, blessed child!

Of a yet stainless altar, and beside
A sainted warrior's tomb!—Oh, fitting place
For thee to yield thy pure heroic soul
Back unto him that gave it!—And thy cheek
Yet smiles in its bright paleness!
Elm. Hadst thou seen
The look with which she pass'd!
Gon. (*still bending over her.*) Why, 'tis almost
Like joy to view thy beautiful repose!
The faded image of that perfect calm
Floats, e'en as long-forgotten music, back
Into my weary heart!—No dark wild spot
On *thy* clear brow doth tell of bloody hands
That quench'd young life by violence!—We 've seen
Too much of horror, in one crowded hour,
To weep for aught so gently gather'd hence!
—Oh! *man* leaves other traces!
Elm. (*suddenly starting.*) It returns
On my bewilder'd soul?—Went ye not forth
Unto the rescue?—And thou 'rt here alone!
—Where are my sons?
Gon. (*solemnly.*) We were too late!
Elm. Too late!
Hast thou nought else to tell me?
Gon. I brought back
From that last field the banner of my sires,
And my own death-wound.
Elm. Thine!
Gon. Another hour
Shall hush its throbs for ever. I go hence,
And with me——

Elm. No!—Man *could* not lift his hands—
—Where hast thou left thy sons?
Gon. I *have* no sons.
Elm. What hast thou said?
Gon. That now there lives not one
To wear the glory of mine ancient house,
When I am gone to rest.
Elm. (*throwing herself on the ground, and speaking in a low hurried voice.*) In one brief hour, all gone!—and *such* a death!.
—I see their blood gush forth!—their graceful heads—
—Take the dark vision from me, oh, my God!
And such a death for *them!*—I was not there!
They were but mine in beauty and in joy,
Not in that mortal anguish!—All, all gone!
—Why should I struggle more?—What *is* this Power,
Against whose might, on all sides pressing us,
We strive with fierce impatience, which but lays
Our own frail spirits prostrate?
[*After a long pause.*
Now I know
Thy hand, my God!—and they are soonest crush'd
That most withstand it!—I resist no more.
[*She rises.*
A light, a light springs up from grief and death,
Which with its solemn radiance doth reveal
Why we have thus been tried!
Gon. Then I may still
Fix my last look on thee, in holy love,
Parting, but yet with hope!

Elm. (*falling at his feet.*) Canst thou forgive?
—Oh, I have driven the arrow to thy heart,
That should have buried it within mine own,
And borne the pang in silence!—I have cast
Thy life's fair honour, in my wild despair,
As an unvalued gem upon the waves,
Whence thou hast snatch'd it back, to bear from earth,
All stainless, on thy breast.—Well hast thou done—
But I—canst thou forgive?

Gon. Within this hour
I've stood upon that verge whence mortals fall,
And learn'd how 'tis with one whose sight grows dim,
And whose foot trembles on the gulf's dark side,
—Death purifies all feeling—We will part
In pity and in love.

Elm. Death!—And thou too
Art on thy way!—Oh, joy for thee, high heart!
Glory and joy for thee!—The day is closed,
And well and nobly hast thou borne thyself
Through its long battle-toils, though many swords
Have enter'd thine own soul!—But on my head
Recoil the fierce invokings of despair,
And I am left far distanced in the race.
The lonely one of earth!—Ay, this is just.
I am not worthy that upon my breast
In this, thine hour of vict'ry, thou should'st yield
Thy spirit unto God!

Gon. Thou art! thou art!
Oh! a life's love, a heart's long faithfulness,
Even in the presence of eternal things,
Wearing their chasten'd beauty all undimm'd,

Assert their lofty claims; and these are not
For one dark hour to cancel!—We are here,
Before that altar which received the vows
Of our unbroken youth, and meet it is
For such a witness, in the sight of Heaven,
And in the face of death, whose shadowy arm
Comes dim between us, to record th' exchange
Of our tried hearts' forgiveness.—Who are they,
That in one path have journey'd, needing not
Forgiveness at its close? [*A* CITIZEN *enters hastily.*

Cit. The Moors! the Moors!

Gon. How! is the city storm'd?
O righteous Heaven! for this I look'd not yet!
Hath all been done in vain? Why, then, 'tis time
For prayer, and then to rest!

Cit. The sun shall set,
And not a Christian voice be left for prayer,
To-night, within Valencia. Round our walls
The paynim host is gathering for th' assault,
And we have none to guard them.

Gon. Then my place
Is here no longer. I had hoped to die
E'en by the altar and the sepulchre
Of my brave sires; but this was not to be!
Give me my sword again, and lead me hence
Back to the ramparts. I have yet an hour,
And it hath still high duties. Now, my wife!
Thou mother of my children—of the dead—
Whom I name unto thee in steadfast hope—
Farewell!

Elm. No, *not* farewell! My soul hath risen
To mate itself with thine; and by thy side,

Amidst the hurling lances, I will stand,
As one on whom a brave man's love hath been
Wasted not utterly.
Gon. I thank thee, Heaven!
That I have tasted of the awful joy
Which thou hast given, to temper hours like this
With a deep sense of thee, and of thine ends
In these dread visitings!
(*To* ELMINA.) We will not part,
But with the spirit's parting.
Elm. One farewell
To her, that, mantled with sad loveliness,
Doth slumber at our feet! My blessed child!
Oh! in thy heart's affliction thou wert strong,
And holy courage did pervade thy woe,
As light the troubled waters! Be at peace!
Thou whose bright spirit made itself the soul
Of all that were around thee! And thy life
E'en then was struck and withering at the core!
Farewell! thy parting look hath on me fallen,
E'en as a gleam of heaven, and I am now
More like what thou hast been. My soul is hush'd,
For a still sense of purer worlds hath sunk
And settled on its depths with that last smile
Which from thine eye shone forth. Thou hast not lived
In vain—my child, farewell!
Gon. Surely for thee
Death had no sting, Ximena! We are blest,
To learn one secret of the shadowy pass,
From such an aspect's calmness. Yet once more
I kiss thy pale young cheek, my broken flower!

In token of th' undying love and hope
Whose land is far away. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX.—*The Walls of the City.*

HERNANDEZ.—*A few Citizens gathered round him.*

Her. Why, men have cast the treasures, which their lives
Had been worn down in gathering, on the pyre,
Ay, at their household hearths have lit the brand,
Even from that shrine of quiet love to bear
The flame which gave their temples and their homes
In ashes, to the winds! They have done this,
Making a blasted void where once the sun
Look'd upon lovely dwellings; and from earth
Razing all record that on such a spot
Childhood hath sprung, age faded, misery wept,
And frail humanity knelt before her God;
They have done *this*, in their free nobleness,
Rather than see the spoiler's tread pollute
Their holy places. Praise, high praise be theirs,
Who have left man such lessons! And these things,
Made your own hills their witnesses! The sky,
Whose arch bends o'er you, and the seas, wherein
Your rivers pour their gold, rejoicing saw
The altar, and the birthplace, and the tomb,
And all memorials of man's heart and faith,
Thus proudly honour'd! Be ye not outdone
By the departed! Though the godless foe
Be close upon us, we have power to snatch
The spoils of victory from him. Be but strong!

A few bright torches and brief moments yet
Shall baffle his flush'd hope, and we may die,
Laughing him unto scorn. Rise, follow me,
And thou, Valencia! triumph in thy fate,
The ruin, not the yoke, and make thy towers
A beacon unto Spain!

Cits. We'll follow thee!

Alas! for our fair city, and the homes
Wherein we rear'd our children! But away!
The Moor shall plant no crescent o'er our fanes!

Voice. (*from a Tower on the Walls.*) Succours!—
Castile! Castile!

Cits. (*rushing to the spot.*) It is even so!
Now blessing be to Heaven, for we are saved!—
Castile! Castile!

Voice. (*from the Tower.*) Line after line of spears,
Lance after lance, upon th' horizon's verge,
Like festal lights from cities bursting up,
Doth skirt the plain. In faith, a noble host!

Another Voice. The Moor hath turn'd him from our walls, to front
Th' advancing might of Spain!

Cits. (*shouting.*) Castile! Castile!

[GONZALEZ *enters, supported by* ELMINA *and a Citizen.*

Gon. What shouts of joy are these?

Her. Hail! chieftain, hail!
Thus, even in death, 'tis given thee to receive
The conqueror's crown! Behold our God hath heard,
And arm'd himself with vengeance! Lo! they come!
The lances of Castile!

Gon. I knew, I knew
Thou would'st not utterly, my God, forsake
Thy servant in his need! My blood and tears
Have not sunk vainly to th' attesting earth!
Praise to thee, thanks and praise, that I have lived
To see this hour!

Elm. And I, too, bless thy name,
Though thou hast proved me unto agony!
O God!—thou God of chastening!

Voice. (*from the Tower.*) They move on!
I see the royal banner in the air,
With its emblazon'd towers!

Gon. Go, bring ye forth
The banner of the Cid, and plant it here,
To stream above me, for an answering sign
That the good cross doth hold its lofty place
Within Valencia still! What see ye now?

Her. I see a kingdom's might upon its path,
Moving, in terrible magnificence,
Unto revenge and victory! With the flash
Of knightly swords, up-springing from the ranks,
As meteors from a still and gloomy deep,
And with the waving of ten thousand plumes,
Like a land's harvest in the autumn-wind,
And with fierce light, which is not of the sun,
But flung from sheets of steel—it comes, it comes,
The vengeance of our God!

Gon. I hear it now,
The heavy tread of mail-clad multitudes,
Like thunder showers upon the forest paths.

Her. Ay, earth knows well the omen of that sound,
And she hath echoes, like a sepulchre's,

Pent in her secret hollows, to respond
Unto the step of death!

Gon. Hark! how the wind
Swells proudly with the battle-march of Spain!
Now the heart feels its power!—A little while
Grant me to live, my God! What pause is this?

Her. A deep and dreadful one!—the serried files
Level their spears for combat; now the hosts
Look on each other in their brooding wrath,
Silent, and face to face.

Voices heard Without, Chanting.

Calm on the bosom of thy God,
Fair spirit! rest thee now!
E'en while with ours thy footsteps trode
His seal was on thy brow.

Dust, to its narrow house beneath!
Soul, to its place on high!
They that have seen thy look in death,
No more may fear to die.

Elm. (*to* GONZALEZ.) It is the death-hymn o'er thy daughter's bier!
But I am calm; and e'en like gentle winds,
That music, through the stillness of my heart,
Sends mournful peace.

Gon. Oh! well those solemn tones
Accord with such an hour, for all her life
Breath'd of a hero's soul!

[*A sound of trumpets and shouting from the plain.*

Her. Now, now they close! Hark! what a dull dead sound
Is in the Moorish war-shout!—I have known
Such tones prophetic oft.—The shock is given—
Lo! they have placed their shields before their hearts,
And lower'd their lances with the streamers on,
And on their steeds bent forward!—God for Spain!
The first bright sparks of battle have been struck
From spear to spear, across the gleaming field!—
There is no sight on which the blue sky looks
To match with this!—'Tis not the gallant crests,
Nor banners with their glorious blazonry;
The very nature and high soul of man
Doth now reveal itself?

Gon. Oh, raise me up,
That I may look upon the noble scene!—
It will not be!—That this dull mist would pass
A moment from my sight!—Whence rose that shout,
As in fierce triumph?

Her. (*clasping his hands.*) Must I look on this?
The banner sinks—'tis taken!

Gon. Whose?

Her. Castile's!

Gon. Oh, God of Battles!

Elm. Calm thy noble heart!
Thou wilt not pass away without thy meed.
Nay, rest thee on my bosom.

Her. Cheer thee yet!
Our knights have spurr'd to rescue.—There is now
A whirl, a mingling of all terrible things,
Yet more appalling than the fierce distinctness

Wherewith they moved before!—I see tall plumes
All wildly tossing o'er the battle's tide,
Sway'd by the wrathful motion, and the press
Of desperate men, as cedar-boughs by storms.
Many a white streamer there is dyed with blood,
Many a false corslet broken, many a shield
Pierced through!—Now, shout for Santiago, shout!
Lo! javelins with a moment's brightness cleave
The thickening dust, and barbed steeds go down
With their helm'd riders!—Who, but One, can tell
How spirits part amidst that fearful rush
And trampling on of furious multitudes?

Gon. Thou 'rt silent!—See'st thou more?—My soul grows dark.

Her. And dark and troubled, as an angry sea,
Dashing some gallant armament in scorn
Against its rocks, is all on which I gaze!—
I can but tell thee how tall spears are cross'd,
And lances seem to shiver, and proud helms
To lighten with the stroke!—But round the spot,
Where, like a storm-fell'd mast, our standard sank,
The heart of battle burns.

Gon. Where is that spot?

Her. It is beneath the lonely tuft of palms,
That lift their green heads o'er the tumult still,
In calm and stately grace.

Gon. *There* didst thou say?
Then God is with us, and we *must* prevail!
For on that spot they died!—My children's blood
Calls on th' avenger thence!

Elm. They perish'd there!
—And the bright locks that waved so joyously

To the free winds, lay trampled and defiled
Even on that place of death!—Oh, Merciful!
Hush the dark thought within me!
Her. (*with sudden exultation.*) Who is he,
On the white steed, and with the castled helm,
And the gold-broider'd mantle, which doth float
E'en like a sunny cloud above the fight;
And the pale cross, which from his breast-plate gleams
With star-like radiance?
Gon. (*eagerly.*) Didst thou say the cross?
Her. On his mail'd bosom shines a broad white cross,
And his long plumage through the dark'ning air
Streams like a snow-wreath.
Gon. That should be—
Her. The king!
—Was it not told us how he sent, of late,
To the Cid's tomb, e'en for the silver cross,
Which he who slumbers there was wont to bind
O'er his brave heart in fight?[9]
Gon. (*springing up joyfully.*) My king! my king!
Now all good saints for Spain!—My noble king!
And thou art there!—That I might look once more
Upon thy face!—But yet I thank thee, Heaven!
That thou hast sent him, from my dying hands
Thus to receive his city!
[*He sinks back into* ELMINA'S *arms.*
Her. He hath clear'd
A pathway 'midst the combat, and the light
Follows his charge through yon close living mass,
E'en as a gleam on some proud vessel's wake

Along the stormy waters!—'Tis redeem'd—
The castled banner!—It is flung once more
In joy and glory, to the sweeping winds!
—There seems a wavering through the paynim hosts—
Castile doth press them sore—Now, now rejoice!
Gon. What hast thou seen?
Her. Abdullah falls! He falls!
The man of blood!—the spoiler!—he hath sunk
In our king's path!—Well hath that royal sword
Avenged thy cause, Gonzalez!
They give way,
The Crescent's van is broken!—On the hills
And the dark pine-woods may the infidel
Call vainly, in his agony of fear,
To cover him from vengeance!—Lo! they fly!
They of the forest and the wilderness
Are scatter'd, e'en as leaves upon the wind!
Woe to the sons of Afric!—Let the plains,
And the vine-mountains, and Hesperian seas,
Take their dead unto them!—that blood shall wash
Our soil from stains of bondage.
Gon. (*attempting to raise himself.*) Set me free!
Come with me forth, for I must greet my king,
After his battle-field!
Her. Oh, blest in death!
Chosen of Heaven, farewell!—Look on the Cross,
And part from earth in peace!
Gon. Now, charge once more!
God is with Spain, and Santiago's sword
Is reddening all the air!—Shout forth "Castile!"
The day is ours!—I go; but fear ye not!

For Afric's lance is broken, and my sons
Have won their first good field! [*He dies.*

Elm. Look on me yet!
Speak one farewell, my husband!—must thy voice
Enter my soul no more!—Thine eye is fix'd—
Now is my life uprooted,—And 'tis well.

[*A sound of triumphant music is heard, and many Castilian Knights and Soldiers enter.*

A Cit. Hush your triumphal sounds, although ye come
E'en as deliverers!—But the noble dead,
And those that mourn them, claim from human hearts
Deep silent reverence.

Elm. (*rising proudly.*) No, swell forth, Castile!
Thy trumpet-music, till the seas and heavens,
And the deep hills, give every stormy note
Echoes to ring through Spain!—How, know ye not
That all array'd for triumph, crown'd and robed
With the strong spirit which hath saved the land,
E'en now a conqueror to his rest is gone?
—Fear not to break that sleep, but let the wind
Swell on with victory's shout!—*He* will not hear—
Hath earth a sound more sad?

Her. Lift ye the dead,
And bear him with the banner of his race
Waving above him proudly, as it waved
O'er the Cid's battles, to the tomb wherein
His warrior-sires are gather'd. [*They raise the body.*

Elm. Ay, 'tis thus
Thou should'st be honour'd!—And I follow thee
With an unfaltering and a lofty step,

To that last home of glory. She that wears
In her deep heart the memory of thy love,
Shall thence draw strength for all things, till the God
Whose hand around her hath unpeopled earth,
Looking upon her still and chasten'd soul,
Call it once more to thine!
(*To the Castilians.*) Awake, I say,
Tambour and trumpet, wake!—And let the land
Through all her mountains hear your funeral peal
—So should a hero pass to his repose.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

NOTES.

Note 1, page 292, line 1.

MOUNTAIN CHRISTIANS, those natives of Spain, who, under their prince, Pelayo, took refuge amongst the mountains of the northern provinces, where they maintained their religion and liberty, whilst the rest of their country was overrun by the Moors.

Note 2, page 320, line 11.

Oh, free doth sorrow pass, &c.

" Frey geht das Unglück durch die ganze Erde."
SCHILLER'S *Death of Wallenstein*, act iv. sc. 2.

Note 3, page 326, line 9.

Tizona, the fire-brand. The name of the Cid's favourite sword, taken in battle from the Moorish king Bucar.

Note 4, page 326, line 11.

How he won Valencia from the Moor, &c.

Valencia, which has been repeatedly besieged and taken by the armies of different nations, remained in the possession of the Moors for a hundred and seventy years after the Cid's death. It was regained from them by King Don Jayme of Aragon, surnamed the Conqueror; after whose success I have ventured to suppose it governed by a descendant of the Campeador.

Note 5, page 350, line 3.

It was a Spanish tradition, that the great bell of the cathedral of Saragossa always tolled spontaneously before a king of Spain died.

Note 6, page 353, line 27.

" El que en buen hora nasco ;" he that was born in happy hour. An appellation given to the Cid in the ancient chronicles.

Note 7, page 354, line 4.

For this, and the subsequent allusions to Spanish legends, see *The Romances, and Chronicle of the Cid.*

Note 8, page 370, line 16.

" La voilà, telle que la mort nous l'a faite!' —BOSSUET, *Oraisons Funèbres.*

Note 9, page 382, line 19.

This circumstance is recorded of King Don Alfonso, the last of that name. He sent to the Cid's tomb for the cross which that warrior was accustomed to wear upon his breast when he went to battle, and had it made into one for himself; " Because of the faith which he had, that through it he should obtain the victory."—*Southey's Chronicle of the Cid.*

CRITICAL ANNOTATIONS

ON

"THE SIEGE OF VALENCIA," "THE LAST CONSTANTINE," &c.

"The present publication appears to us, in every respect superior to any thing Mrs Hemans has yet written—more powerful in particular passages—more interesting in the narrative part—as pathetic and delicate in the reflective—as elaborately faultless in its versification—as copious in imagery. Of the longer poems, *The Last Constantine* is our favourite. The dramatic poem which follows it, entitled *The Siege of Valencia*, exhibits too evidently the weak points of Mrs Hemans's poetry—a want of dramatic invention, a penury of incident, and the substitution of lyrical for passionate dialogue. The leading features of Constantine's character seem to be taken from the unequal, but, on the whole, admirable play of *Constantine Palæologus*, by the gifted rival of our authoress, Joanna Baillie; and the picture of that enduring and Christian courage, which, in the midst of 'a ruined city and a fallen state,' sustained the last of the Cæsars, when all earthly hope and nelp had failed him, is eminently touching and poetical. The following stanzas appear to us particularly beautiful.

> 'Sounds from the waters, sounds upon the earth,
> Sounds in the air, of battle,' &c.

The following stanzas, too, in which the leading idea of Constantine's character is still more fully brought out, are likewise excellent.

'It was a sad and solemn task to hold
Their midnight watch on that beleaguer'd wall,' &c.

"These are splendid passages, justly conceived, admirably expressed, full of eloquence and melody; and the poem contains many others equally beautiful. As we have already hinted, the story might have been better told; or rather, there is scarcely any story at all, but the reader is borne down the stream of pensive reflection, so gently and so easily, that he scarcely perceives the want of it.

"Of the *Siege of Valencia* we say little, for we by no means consider it as the happiest of Mrs Hemans's efforts. Not that it does not contain, nay, abound with fine passages; but the whole wants vigour, coherence, and compression. The story is meagre, and the dialogue too diffuse.

"*The Festal Hour* certainly appears to us to be one of the noblest regular and classical odes in the English language—happy in the general idea, and rich in imagery and illustration."—The Rev. Dr Morehead, in *Constable's Magazine* for September, 1823.

"*The Siege of Valencia* is a dramatic poem, but not intended for representation. The story is extremely simple. The Moors, who beseige Valencia, take the two sons of the Governor, Gonzalez, captive, as they come to visit their father, and now the ransom demanded for them is the surrender of the city: they are to die if the place is not yielded up. Elmina, the mother of the boys, and Ximena, their sister, are the remaining members of a family to which so dreadful an option is submitted. The poem is one of the highest merit. The subject is of great dignity, being connected with the defence of Spain against the Moors, and at the same time it is of the greatest tenderness, offering a succession of the most moving scenes that can be imagined to occur in the bosom of a family. The father is firm, the daughter is heroic; the mother falters. She finds her way to the Moorish camp, sees her children, forms her plan for betraying the town, and then is not able to conceal her grief and her design from her husband. He immediately sends a defiance to the Moors, his children

are brought out and beheaded, a *sortie* is made from the besieged city: finally, the king of Spain arrives to the rescue; the wrongs of Gonzalez are avenged; he himself dies in victory; and the poem closes with a picture of his wife, moved by the strongest grief, of which she is yet able to restrain the expression. The great excellence of the poem lies in the description of the struggle between the consciousness of duty and maternal fondness. We believe none but a mother could have written it."—PROFESSOR NORTON, in *North American Review* for April 1827.

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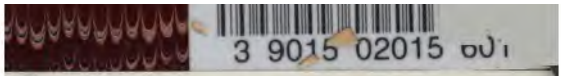

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